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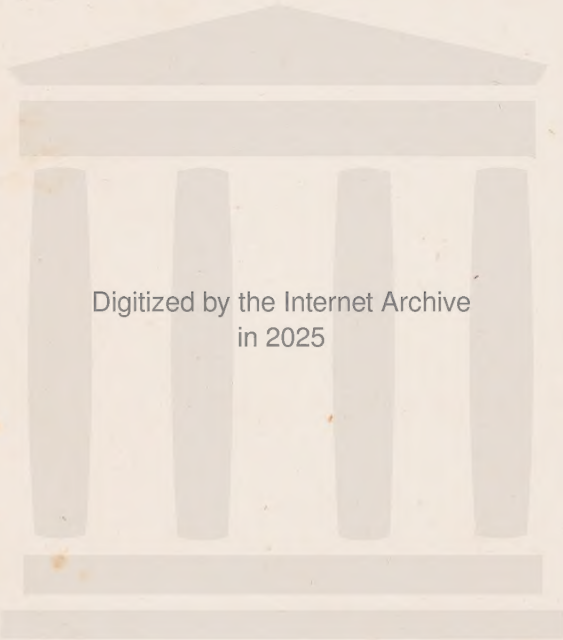
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THE
BIT O' WRITIN'

AND
OTHER TALES.

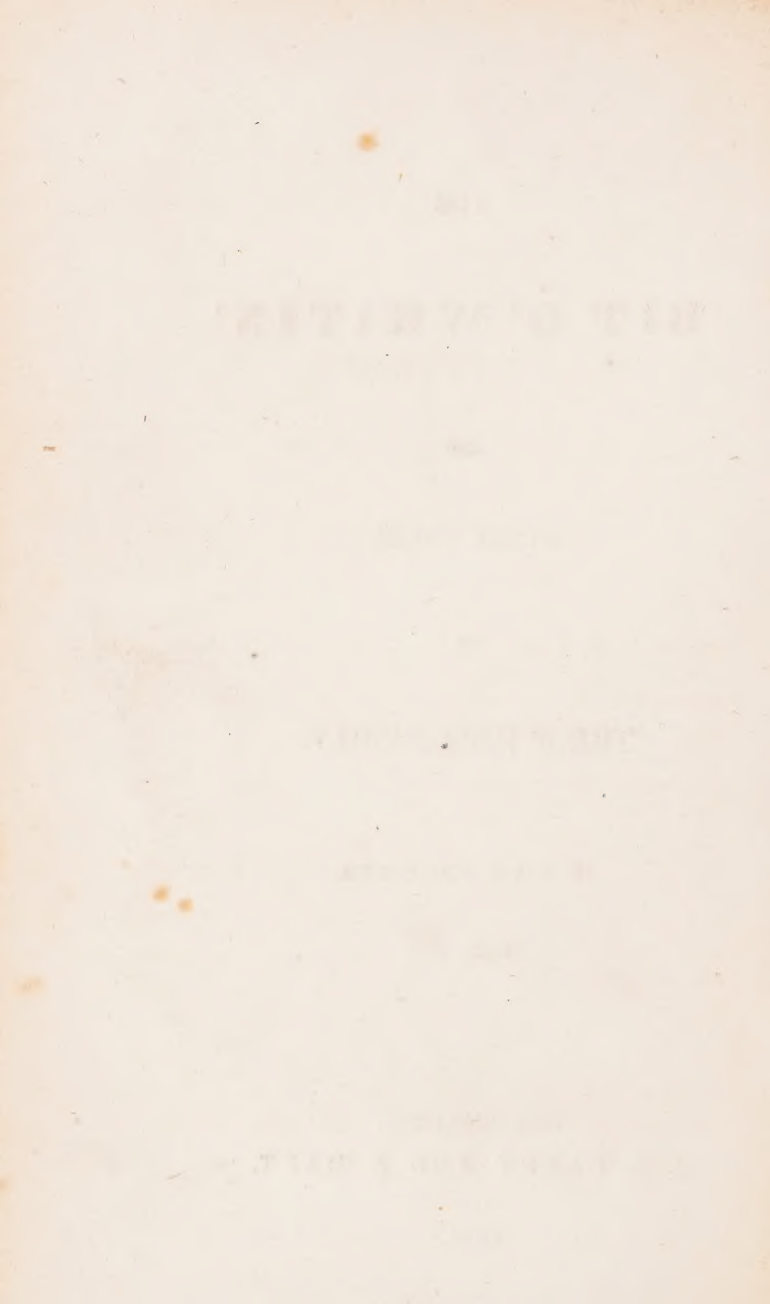
BY
THE O' HARA FAMILY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
E. L. CAREY AND A. HART.

1838.



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QUARTER

of the year 1881

1	Jan 1	to Jan 31	1881
2	Feb 1	to Feb 28	1881
3	Mar 1	to Mar 31	1881
4	Apr 1	to Apr 30	1881
5	May 1	to May 31	1881
6	Jun 1	to Jun 30	1881
7	Jul 1	to Jul 31	1881
8	Aug 1	to Aug 31	1881
9	Sep 1	to Sep 30	1881
10	Oct 1	to Oct 31	1881
11	Nov 1	to Nov 30	1881
12	Dec 1	to Dec 31	1881

THE HALF-BROTHERS.

LUCY HAWKINS, at sixteen, was the belle, if not the beauty, of her little sea-washed village on the coast of Kent. Other girls might boast a more perfect shape and handsomer features; but her effect, her expression, or—if a fashionable French word may, with allowances, be applied to a lowly maiden—her *tourneur* eclipsed them all. She was also celebrated for a vivacity of manner and conversation unusual amongst young females of her class: nay in the opinions of a numerous circle of good judges, who constantly enjoyed her company and discourse, Lucy Hawkins deserved to be termed witty.

Her mother kept the post-office of the village, together with a general huckster's shop, and a hotel in one of her out-houses for very humble wanderers or sojourners—beds threepence per night. Upon a large deal chest, the good dame's flour-store, which stood under her shop window, opposite to her counter, hard-worked labourers, employed in the neighbourhood, would sit and eat their four penny-worth of bread and cheese, and drink their half pint of small-beer, by way of the morning's or afternoon's meal; and Lucy generally served them, or else

stood by while they were served, and, at the same time, her good humour materially helped to give zest to their meagre breakfast or dinner. At the upper end of the counter was a rush-bottomed, curiously-legged, old oak chair, a fixture, put forward for any chatty neighbour or visitor, who might like an hour's gossiping: and since, its establishment it had, indeed, seldom been left empty as was indicated, even during its leisure moments, by a little round cavity worn in the tiled floor, just at the spot where its successive occupants necessarily rested their heels. And with their revellers on the chest, and the numerous patrons of this oak chair, to say nothing of ordinary customers and her own particular friends, Lucy became quite a public character, and, as has been hinted, quite a favourite. The poor people, who, towards night, crept through the shop to their straw beds over the hen-house in the yard, also shared her sparkling conversation and acknowledged its cheery influence.

And there were other visitors who also admitted her attractions, though it would have been better for Lucy if we could limit her encomiastic friends to those already mentioned. Over one department of the manifold concern she had absolute sway; her mother did not know now to read hand-writing, and, considering the frequency of almost illegible superscriptions on the backs of letters, the deputation of authority alluded to became a matter of prudence, if not of necessity. At the inquiry of every claimant for letters "to be left till called for," it was Lucy, therefore, who always unlocked the little rude deal box—about the size and much in the shape of a salt-box—which, clumsily nailed against the wooden pane with the slit in the shop-window, formed the whole apparatus of the post-office branch of the establishment.

Many officers of the preventive-service, although they had abundance of unemployed men to go to Mrs. Hawkin's shop in their stead, would call in every morning to ask for their letters; and at different hours of their idle day return to purchase a quarter of an ounce of Scotch

stuff, or something else of which they could have less use, such as a row of pins, a yard of tape, or a reel of thread. In fact, it became evident that three of them were rivals for the smiles of Lucy Hawkins.

Two of the three soon ensured to themselves, however, any thing but her smiles. For offences separately received at their hands, she invariably left the shop whenever they entered it; and as Lucy's conduct was not a mere show of female anger, they absented themselves, and gave up their unmanly pursuit. The third whose visits were still received, was more seriously in love with Lucy than either of his friends; but, whether from a nicer sense of honour, or that the fate of the others had taught him a lesson, Lieutenant Stone did not lightly or hastily tell her so. Much younger than his rivals, perhaps he was more romantic, and, particularly since Lucy's late specimen of self-assertion, would not indulge his admiration with a view to any mean indulgence of it. And, in fact, when after sitting in the shop, upon the flour-chest, or in the old chair, day after day for more than six months, he at last whispered his sentiments to Lucy, the declaration sounded seriously and respectfully to her ear, and she concluded, could be made only in one hope—that of obtaining her hand with the due consent of father and mother.

The scene must now be very abruptly changed, with a breach of the three unities of time, place, and action.

Twelve years after Lucy Hawkins accepted the suit of her chosen lover, we enter a small wooden house, indeed a very poor shed, in another little sea-coast hamlet, many miles distant from her native one. The walls of its only sitting-room, a kitchen, are bare; the floor is tiled; and the few articles of indispensable furniture are old, common, and crazy: and yet the poor apartment looks clean, or, to use an humble, but expressive and very English word, tidy. A woman as ill-clad as her house is ill-appointed, but, like it, tidy too sits on a stool, teaching a sturdy, sun-burnt boy of seven years to read out of a *Reading Made Easy*. She seems about forty, but may

be much younger than she looks, for her composed features would suggest long acquaintance with misfortune—the often successful anticipator of time's utmost efforts to destroy. A half-finished female dress, of materials too costly, and of shape too fashionable, to be destined to the use of the lonely occupant of the lonely abode, lies, together with the little implements of woman's industry, upon a table at her side, hinting the mode of pursuit by which she earns scanty bread for her young pupil and herself.

The task is over, and Billy is kissed and called a good boy: and while his mother combs his yellow hair in smooth and equal portions towards either temple—"There, my king," she says; and now, where is brother to take you out to play?

"The naughty great boys were *quarrelling* Charley on the shingles, mother, when he sent Billy home to his task to be rid of them."

"And what game did they quarrel over, Billy?"

"No ga-on mother; but Dick Saunders called Charley a bad name."

"Tell mother the bad name, my man."

"Billy caunt—he doesn't know it now, mother."

Their conversation was interrupted by the quick entrance of Charley himself. The moment his mother saw him, she uttered an alarmed cry. His clenched hands were thrust into his trowsers' pockets; he frowned, for the first time in his life his mother had *seen* him do so: his lips quivered; tears glazed his eyes; his face, nay, his forehead and ears, flamed scarlet, and blood trickled down his cheeks. Obviously, he had been fighting a hard battle, but, as obviously was the victor. The boy was about twelve.

"Let Billy go play at the door, and I'll tell you mother; he said, after she had addressed many anxious inquiries to him.

She led the little fellow out, and shut the door upon herself and Charley. He dropt in a chair, flung his arms over the table, laid his face upon them, and burst into a furious fit of crying.

"Naughty Dick Saunders has hurt you, Charley, mother's darling!" she cried, approaching him.

"No--not as well as I have hurt him--the story-teller; the puppy!" sobbed Charles. "Mother, Dick Saunders spoke ill of me, and of you."

"What did he say, Charley?"

"I can't repeat it after him--I won't. But, mother, I be old enough to ask you what I'm going to ask--Was Master Turner, who died last year, Billy's father?"

"To be sure he was, Charley." She grew uneasy.

"And your husband?"

"Yes."

"And *my* father too?"

She changed colour, and dropped her eyes beneath the deep glance of her child.

"Now, Charley, I know what they said of you and me; and the time is indeed come for me to speak to you of what nearly concerns you."

"Did Dick Saunders tell no story, mother?" interrupted Charley, sitting upright, and again unconsciously scrutinising her face. She raised her eyes, met his for an instant and then sank back in her chair, covering her features with her hands, and weeping dolefully.

"I ask pardon, mother," said the generous and hitherto gentle boy, as he gained her side, and put his arms round her neck: "you always loved me, and I shall always love you, let them say what they will of us. Kiss Charley, mother, won't you?"

Fondly, almost wildly, she embraced him, and resumed. "No, Charley--Master Turner, my husband, was not your father: stop a moment." She stepped into her little bed-room; returned with a small, square, red-leather case; placed it in his hand; sat down averted her head; began to move the work on the table, and would vainly hide her continued tears, as she added, "open that, and you will know more of your father."

While he obeyed her commands, Charley recollected that he had more than once detected his mother weeping

over the little red-leather case. When the miniature met his eye, the boy started.

"My father was a ship's captain!" he cried.

"He was an officer in the king's navy," she answered.

"And a gentleman, mother?"

"His commission made him one, Charley; but he would have been a true gentleman without it."

"And he married you, before Master Turner married you, mother?"

"Charley, your father and I were never married."

A pause ensued. Charley's features betrayed a bitter and a fierce inward combat, as his glance still fixed on the miniature.

"Is he dead?" he at length asked.

"I hope not, but I am not sure. Sometimes I think one thing, sometimes another. Listen, my king. I was very young when I met your father; and I wondered, and many others, wondered, what he could see in me to love. I was his inferior in every way. To be sure, my poor mother had managed to keep me at good schools till I was a great girl, and perhaps this made me something in his eyes. Then, when he began to keep company, with father's and mother's consent, he taught me, like a master, himself, a great many things that improved my mind and my manners, ay, and my heart too; but I am not going on with my story. We were to be married at the end of two years. Before the first year came round he was ordered from the blockade-service to a ship, at only a few hours' notice. He ran down to our shop, and showing the letter, prayed mother to let us be made man and wife that very evening. She would not hear of it, saying I was too young, and did not know my own mind, and would not know how to behave as his wife. He begged and prayed once again, and cried tears, and went on his knees; she held firm to her word. But, alas! Charley, it had been doing better if she had not held so firm to it, or else not have left us alone to take leave of each other that evening. And next day, ay, before it was day, your father left our village, and I have never seen him since."

"But he has sent letters to you, mother?"

"I got none, if he did: though I believe he did, and that an enemy kept them from my hands. A very short time after he left us, my father died, my mother grew poor, and we were turned out of our comfortable little house, not being able to pay our rent. The shop was re-opened by a woman and her daughter who bore me no good will, and on your father's account too. He had paid some compliments to the daughter before he met me, and they blamed me for taking him from them. And—God forgive me if I wrong either mother or daughter—but I do fear that letters from your father to me, and from me to him, were stopt by the new keepers of our post-office. Well Charley, you were born while my mother and I lived in a very poor way, trying to support ourselves with our needles, and keep out of the workhouse. Your father's silence almost broke my heart. I did not suspect foul play about the letters then; 'tis only lately people gave me some hints, and all I could think was that he had forsaken us both, my king. My mother died too, and you and I were left quite alone, Charley. Years after, when, try as I would or could, we were getting worse and worse off, Master Turner came from his village to ours, on business, and knowing my whole story, asked me to marry him. He was a man well to do in the world at that time, and a kind man too; and so, after giving up all other hopes, I thought, Charley, that, even for your sake, I ought not to refuse a comfortable home and comfortable living. But it seemed as if every one was to have ill-luck with me. Good Master Turner began to grow poor from that very day, till last year, when he died, leaving us as badly off as he found us; and that's the whole story, Charley; only, here are you and I living alone again, with your little half-brother, Billy to keep us company.

"Well; and I be glad of his company, mother," said Charley: "I always loved little Billy for his own sake, and because he loved me"—(the mutual affection of the boys was indeed very remarkable)—"and now, though, as you say, he turns out to be only my half-brother, I'll love him

better for his father's sake, who was a friend to you when you wanted a friend. But we must open the door and let him in."

Billy's voice had been heard calling on Charles to run down with him to the beach, and see the grand three-masted ship that was passing but a little way out, and, people said, seemed about to send a boat ashore. Ere Charles went to the door, he held out the miniature, and asked, "may I see it often again, mother?"

"Keep it,—'tis your own, Charley—here"—passing a riband through the loop at its top, "hang it round your neck."

As his mother secured it, he once more felt her tears dropping fast on his head, and looking up into her face, he stole his arms around her.

"Go, now, mother's darlings," as hand in hand they left her humble threshold; "but, Charley, do not stray out far on the sands: it will be a spring-tide, I fear, and the breeze comes fresh from the sea."

Still hand in hand they proceeded on their walk; Billy unusually communicative, and Charles unusually silent. Indeed the younger boy remarked his brother's taciturnity, and taxed him with it. They met groups of their former playmates in the village street, whom the child wished to join; but Charles, chucking him closer to his side, passed them by, knitting his brow and holding up his head. On the shingles appeared other groups, and the young misanthrope would not descend to the water's edge until he had proceeded several hundred yards above their position.

It was a beautiful spring day. The breeze lashed the waves into a sportive fury. Sun and cloud, light and shade, alternated their effects over the wide bosom of the sea, streaking it with gold and pea-green, with dark purple or deep blue. Now a distant sail was a white speck on the horizon, now a spot of dark, dotting a clear sky. The three-master, of which little Billy had spoken, lay-to, about a mile from shore. Charles knew her to be an East-Indiaman. His brother urged him to approach her

as closely as the sands permitted. Still wrapt up in his own thoughts and feelings, Charles silently stepped down the shingles, looking jealously around to note if they were alone.

Behind him, as he began to move towards the waves, was a low line of cliff, forming, at a particular point, a jutting platform, from the outward edge of which the continuation of the cliff swept, like a buttress to the shingles. Before him stretched the strand, to nearly the distance of half-a-mile, where it was met by an irregular circle of black rocks, closely wedged together, and enclosing the last patch of sand visible even at low-tide. Charles had not intended to approach this spot; but as he walked in an oblique direction from it, some straggling boys appeared coming against him, and he hastily led his little charge to the convenient screen of the tall rocks.

The tide had for some time been coming in. Often before, however, Charles had ventured farther out, when it was more advanced, and returned to shore with only wet feet and a splashing. The rocks could not at any point be easily scaled, so high and broad was their barrier; nor did they admit of ingress into the sandy area they girded, save at a particular spot, sea-ward, where, some feet from their base, appeared a narrow fissure, still difficult of access. Charles therefore walked round them until he gained this opening; then, assisting his little brother to climb up to it, the two boys soon stood upon a projection inside the rocky belt, and turned their faces towards the sea.

They could perceive by a bustle on the deck of the Indiaman, now so near to them, that a boat would soon be lowered from her side. They looked out, much interested, until the boat lightly touched the tossing waves near the vessel's prow, and became strongly manned, as if to put off for shore. Still, however, the men rested on their oars, and seemed waiting for some other person to descend. And, in a mood that sympathized with the scene, Charles continued to watch the boat, dancing to and fro, and sometimes almost jumping out of the water; for

the breeze grew stiffer, and the waves rougher. Half an hour he stood motionless, disregarding, for the first time in his life, the prattle of the little boy at his side. At last the individual for whom the boat waited, clad in blue and white, and gold lace, to Billy's great delight, jumped in amongst his men, stood up, at their head, pointed to shore, and was rapidly rowed towards it.

For some time the near roar of waters had been ringing in Charles's ear, but he made light of the warning, for he confidently argued from experience, whenever his thoughts reverted to the matter, that there was still sufficient time to return to the shingles with scarce a wet shoe. But he did not reckon that the spot of sand, with which he now stood enclosed, was much higher than the outer sands which stretched to the bases of the rocks. He did not reckon that the tide, at a certain period of its flow, after turning a near point of land, usually ran with almost the rapidity of a mill-stream, against the right-hand segment of the barrier, and then, directed by its curve, inundated in a trice the previously open space between it and the shingles. Above all, he did not remember what his mother had hinted at parting; for, indeed, her omen proved true; it was a spring-tide.

The ship's boat, still seen at a distance, glanced athwart the patch of sea revealed through the fissure at which the boys looked out. More alive, after its disappearance, to the unusual noise of the waters, Charley took his brother's hand to lead him home by the way they had come. To his consternation, a fiercely-crested wave leaped into their faces through the narrow opening, drenching both to the skin. He let go Billy's hand, and sprang up to the top of the circular wall of rocks. A foamy sea tossed all around him. His eye caught the gallant boat, about a quarter of a mile distant. He screamed to it; jumped down to his little brother; dragged him up to the spot he had just quitted, and screamed again. There was a little cavity, formed by the irregular junction, at their sharp extremities, of the rocks, and in this he placed the now bewildered and weeping child, to preserve him from

being dashed inward by the quickly increasing sea; and clinging himself to the highest pinnacle he could grasp, once more he wildly hailed the boat.

Most probably he had now caught its notice. It put round and pulled towards him; but soon seemed deterred from venturing too near the dangerous rocks.

"Oh God!—oh, mother, mother! your Billy! Mother's darling! *he* at least will be drowned, though I may swim till they pick me up—and all *my* fault!—but no, no!" He pulled off his jacket and waistcoat, and tore his shirt into long strips.—"No! he shall not!—Come Billy! I will tie you to my back! never fear, my king—and see if I don't swim like a fish for you!"

The child, having heard and noted all his words and actions, had stopped crying, and, as if struck with Charles's noble conduct and sentiments, and unconsciously sympathizing with them, answered: "I won't, Charley, I won't;—I should sink you, and we should only be drowned together, then, and no one left with mother."

All this while breakers had been dashing from without nearly up to the summits of the rocks at the opposite sweep of the circle, and as Charles eagerly, indeed violently renewed his entreaties, they at last came leaping and plunging up to its very edge, like dark, white-maned war-horses, trying to rear and paw over some high and well-guarded embankment. Once again he hoarsely cried out to the boat. It was nearer to him, but still seemed cautious of actual approach. He turned for the last time to Billy, and seized him in his arms to compel him to do his bidding. The riband which held his father's miniature round his neck snapped in the exertion; the miniature itself was rolling outwardly into the surf; he snatched at it, and secured it, but lost his balance, and the next instant was kicking among the breakers.

The captain of the East-Indiaman had with his pocket-glass witnessed the greater part of the scene between the young brothers, and, as he saw Charles tumble from the rocks, gallantly ordered his men to dare a good deal, and pull towards the spot where the boy had sunk. Present-

ly Charley reappeared, swimming stoutly; not for the boat, however, but back again to the now almost invisible rocks. The captain and his men called to him, but he did not heed them. It has been mentioned that when the boys walked out to the sands, they directly turned their backs upon a platform in a low line of cliff. At that moment, not only the platform and its rugged buttress-base, but the shingles beneath, were perfectly dry. Now the raging surf of a spring-tide, excited by a stiff breeze, foamed up to the level of the former: and almost simultaneously with Charley's reappearance, a woman, screaming loudly, descended the difficult passage from the brow of the cliff, and gained the slippery shelf. Many people followed her to the top line of the precipice, but no one ventured to her side. Her cries reached the young swimmer, through all the roar of the sea, and he redoubled his vain efforts to reach his little brother. But very soon exertion became useless. At one enraged and reinforced charge of the breakers, the area enclosed by the rocky circle, hitherto little intruded on, was inundated, and no part of the black barrier-line remained visible, except that formed by the pinnacles amid which the child stood wedged: a curling chain of foam supplied its place. And now, his mother from the shore, his brother from the sea, and the captain and his men from their boat, witnessed the conduct of the little sufferer. He had been sitting: he stood up: a breaker struck him; he staggered: another came; he fell, disappeared: was still seen, however, upon a point of rock, raising his hands, and clapping them over his head, until at the third blow the little fellow became engulfed in the whirling waters.

The boat was now very near to Charles; and, at last, seemingly attentive to the remonstrance of its crew, he turned, and languidly swam towards its side.

"What the deuce has the young grampus fished up between his teeth?" said the captain, as he assisted in reaching out an oar; "a boiled crab, I reckon; though, where they got a fire to boil it, at the bottom of this surf, is more than I can imagine."

"Charles was dragged into the boat, and without a word or a cry fell stupified upon its bottom. The miniature dropped from his unclenched teeth; the captain took it up, opened it, and startled his men by uttering a loud exclamation. Then he stooped to Charley's face and peered into it; then glanced to the cliff; and, finally, ordering every oar to pull for the shingles, he knelt on one knee, raised Charley's head to the other; and his crew were still more surprised to see their bluff captain embrace the almost senseless lad, kiss his cheeks and forehead, and weep over him profusely, though in silence.

The boat had not shot far, when little Billy floated ahead. The captain gently, though hastily, put Charles down, and with much energy assisted in picking up the child, who soon lay stretched beside his half-brother, rescued indeed from the sea, but, it seemed evident, quite dead. Still the captain cried, "pull, men, pull!"

"Vigorously and skilfully obeying his orders, they ran the lively boat upon the shingles, a good distance below the point at which the low cliff gradually dipped to their surface. The mother flew down to meet her children and their unknown friends. The anxious crowd followed her. She received Charley from the captain's arms; a sailor followed, holding Billy, wrapped in the captain's jacket, to his bosom. At her first word the elder boy opened his eyes; after straining him to her heart she flew to his brother. No word had effect upon him. The captain called out for a surgeon: the village practitioner and the blockade surgeon were both at hand. They caused the child to be conveyed into a neighbouring cottage, and there, in the presence of the mother and the captain, promptly engaged in all the usual measures for restoring animation: but all failed. They repeated their exertions, still without effect; and at length pronouncing Billy to be a corse, left the cottage.

Charles had been stretched across the foot of the bed upon which, wrapped in blankets, lay his little half-brother. At first he did not comprehend his situation, or notice the occurrences around him. Now, however, he seemed to

hear the departing words of the surgeons, for, raising himself upon his elbow, he gazed first into his mother's face, as she sat in silent anguish by the bedside, and then he tried to move upward towards Billy. While making this effort, the captain, gently laying his hand on the mother's shoulder, asked to speak aside with her. She arose, in the languid indifference of grief, and followed him into a corner of the room, out of view of the bed. "Lucy!" was the captain's only word, soothingly whispered at her ear. She drew back, looked up into his face, and was supported in his arms. A brief explanation proved that her suspicions of her revengeful rival at the village post-office were well-founded. While, from the suppression of the captain's letters to her, Lucy had believed him cruel and faithless, the holding back, also, of her letters to him had caused her sincere lover to conclude that she was no better than a village-coquette, who, the moment he left her presence, forgot him, and insulted his memory and his devotion in the smiles of a new admirer; perhaps in the smiles of more than one. Hence, after her seeming silence of many years, he had proudly struggled to give up Lucy Hawkins for ever; and though, since their parting, he could often have returned to her village, he would not so far humiliate himself. Some inquiries, however, he condescended to make by a confidential person sent for the purpose, merely with the view of ascertaining if Lucy were alive or dead,—for death alone, he argued, could explain her supposed conduct. About the very time his emissary arrived in the village, she had become the envied wife of the rich Master Turner; and this intelligence necessarily confirmed his former angry resolutions.

The Captain and Lucy yet spoke, when Charles's voice sounded shrill and joyfully from the bed; "Yes, Billy, yes!—'tis Charley! Billy!—mother's darling!" They stepped round to the bedside. He had crept under the blankets, and clasped the child close to his bosom; and now, indeed, the efforts of the surgeons, although despaired of by themselves, began to yield a good result.

"He would not die, to let you say I killed him, mother," said Charles, laughing through his tears.

"The child lives, by Heavens!" cried the captain.

That day Captain Stone was married to the woman of his early choice; and having despatched before evening the trifling business which first called him to shore, he conveyed his wife to his ship, together with her two sons, and pursued his voyage.

TWICE LOST, BUT SAVED.

PERHAPS there is no country so little susceptible, generally speaking, of public sensation as England; events which agitate the peasant, nay the peasant's wife, at the other side of the straits of Dover, would scarce reach John Bull in his village chimney-nook,—certainly would not disturb the serenity of his countenance if they did. And yet there is one species of occurrence which excites, and prevades English people, through every grade of society, more than it could or at least more than it does, any other civilised nation. A murder—a downright, in earnest murder—broad-featured, well-marked, unequivocal, refined—arouses into unusual vivacity all England, from the banks of the Tweed to the Land's End. Its fame spreads, from cities and towns into the recesses of the small mountain hamlet. Men, women, girls, and children, talk and think of nothing else. The newspapers teem with nothing else, excepting only and always the unheeded advertisements of new books. Literary talent of really a high order is vented in descriptions, speculations, deductions, and sentimental discussions on the subject. Artists hurry down to the rural scene of the atrocity to make money by making

drawings of it, as well as of all the innocent scenery and accompaniments within view. Thousands of people, who cannot wait for their second-hand information, hurry after them, or anticipate them, to see with their own eyes; or to hear with their own ears, the whispered anecdotes of the half-petrified carter, who, in the gray dawn of the drizzling morning, found the stained bread-knife, or the discharged pocket-pistol, (the first dreadful intimators of the deed,) in the lonesome bridle-road, or by the side of the stagnant pool; or they pay round sums to have to say that they sat down in the little back-parlour, or scrambled through the brake where the murderer so lately sat or passed. A bit of the chair upon which he reposed while contemplating his crime, as he glanced into his victim's face, or a branch of the briars among which they struggled together, is eagerly purchased, and reverently and tenderly preserved like a saint's relic or a true-love token. Is all this to be called honest, natural abhorrence? What would Rochefoucault call it?—particularly after detecting in the cabinet of the collector of curiosities the last possible mementos of the sentenced and executed hero, in the shape, perhaps, (lavishly bribed from the law's humblest officer,) of an inch of twisted hemp, the corner of a flaming red cravat, or a gentle lock of redder hair.

So thoroughly had the tidings of such an event as is alluded to penetrated the nooks and corners of the land at the commencement of this little tale, that naught else was discussed around the fire-side of the humblest and most isolated country cottage; and scarce aught else upon the truant and noisy forms of the lowliest village-school. While manhood and old age rehearsed the tale with the profoundest interest, boyhood and childhood commented upon it, in whispers which bespoke a little interest deepened by awe and fear. The murder had, indeed, been of a fearful character. But it must be remarked that weeks had now passed over since its occurrence; that its wretched perpetrator had undergone the earthly expiation of his tremendous crime; and that, notwithstanding, it had not yet begun to relax its influence upon the ge-

neral mind of the country. And this part requires to be explained.

Justice had gained her victim with difficulty. Circumstantial evidence was slight and loose against him, and although he had been apprehended upon strong suspicions, it seemed that, after repeated examinations before the magistrates, he must have been discharged from prison. Upon the eve of his contemplated day of enfranchisement, a woman visited him in his cell. A person was so posted as to listen to their conversation. She had been suspected of carrying in spirits to the prisoner, but the irregularity was overlooked by the jailor in hopes of the results it might produce. The miserable beings caroused together, first speaking in cautious whispers, but, gradually, high enough to be imperfectly overheard by the eavesdropper. It appeared that although married, they had only recently met with each other, previous to which event the female had been a poor outcast, glad to avail herself of any protection. The listener thought he then could recognise allusions to the murder, but that the man stopped them, his husky voice sinking into a low and ominous tone. The topic changed. The woman slightly upbraided her companion with having deceived her. She said it was whispered that he had a wife living. His answer came abruptly and savagely. She repeated her charge in an angry voice; they quarrelled; she reeled and shrieked under his blows; and during her fit of indignation, he who listened caught though still imperfectly enough, to authorise the jailor in making more objections to her departure than he had done to her admission. In fact, she was speedily removed to a separate cell, and carefully secured under lock and key and bolt.

The object now was to induce a disclosure of all she knew. Magistrates, officers of justice, ministers of religion, visited her alternately, or together. At first it became surmised that she was an actual accomplice. Her gradual confessions, however, if they could be believed, combated this opinion; and finally, as if a heart, once good and never irremediably depraved had been touched in her

bosom by a horror of the insinuated accusation, she fell upon her knees, and, with clasped hands and streaming eyes called heaven to witness that so far from having participated in the hellish crime, she had often, though vainly, interfered to prevent it during the unhappy moments that the murdered man remained alive in her presence.

This was enough, or nearly so, for executing justice upon her wretched associate. The details were elicited at subsequent intervals; repeated by her before a judge and jury; the murderer perished as a deliberate spiller of blood should perish; and the doors of her prison-house opened, and she passed out into the world—free.

Free—but it was not freedom to her. Hatred, abhorrence, avoidance, curses, execrations, met her at every step, and left no path open for her to choose among her fellow creatures. All hearts were shut against her as close, ay, closer than the iron door of her cell had been. Public opinion, particularly in such cases, is rapidly and tyrannically made up. In the interval between her confession and the trial of the greater criminal, the notion first adopted by her visitors in the jail, that she had been a real accomplice in the cruel and abominable murder, seized upon the minds of the community at large. Nay, immediately before the day of trial, every one bandied about the belief that she was the sole homicide, and that she had accused her former companion only in order to save herself. Whether or not these rumours reached that individual in his solitary dungeon cannot be said, but he acted so as to give them a seemingly unquestionable confirmation. After the verdict of the jury had been returned, and again upon the trembling verge of eternity, he declared his own innocence and her guilt. The decent crowd male and female, grey-beards and piping children, fully credited his assertions, and gratified him with three horrid growls upon the name of Martha Hall—for so was the wretched woman called—before his ears grew dull for ever to the sounds of this world. The only person who at that moment seemed to doubt his sincerity was the clergyman who attended him; for the culprit's heart had con-

tinued hard and obstinate to the very last, against every exhortation to die in peace with God and with his kind.

But the miserable Martha Hall could gain little from the single doubt of the good priest. It was the crowd, the arbitrary, the inhuman crowd, she had to face, and, one and all, they rose up against her. Unnerved and ill after her release from jail, she had sought a squalid lodging in the suburbs of the town in which her nominal husband suffered death. Half an hour subsequent to his mortal exit, the howl of the people came towards her door; her old landlady thrust her out to them, and she fled through their recoiling masses, stunned with curses, with yells, with hissings and hootings, with blows of offal and of hands. The constables could scarce save her life. Half-clad, faint, weeping, screaming, tottering, they finally succeeded, however, in escorting her beyond the bounds of the town, and then left her panting on the road-side, her back leaning against the fence, and her feet resting in the putrid water at its bottom. Did she find peace here? did any good Samaritan pass that way? No; but some who had seen her in the neighbouring streets did, and taking the other side of the road, they refrained from heaping more cruelty, more dirt and revilings upon her head, only until they could summon to their aid in the task, the fellow-creatures in whose parish she had now dared to set the sole of her foot. And soon the fresh crowd gathered round her; and, amid renewed yellings and blows, she was again hunted, like a mad dog, into another parish, the local officers still scarce able to save her from perishing under the hands of an indignant christian community, most of whom went, each sabbath-day, to one place of worship or another, and listened to the interpretation of the doctrine of christian charity.

And so from place to place, wherever she sought a refuge, or a breathing-spot, Martha Hall was pursued. Her name and the curse upon her ran like wildfire before her; so that she was dreaded, and expected, and prepared for, ere she made her appearance in a near town, or village, or hamlet, or parish, and received and wel-

comed accordingly. Reports of the outrages committed upon her regularly found their way into the newspapers, and thus the more remote haunts of man became acquainted with her "whereabouts;" and people living a hundred miles from the latest scene of her disgrace were able to trace her wretched wanderings, and calculate the likelihood of her shaping her course towards them.

And these were the circumstances which kept up in every mind, long after such a public fever generally abates, the interest of the late murder. At each new account of the expulsion of Martha Hall beyond the new bounds within which she vainly hoped to find an asylum, all the circumstances of the event that led to her persecution became discussed over again, with a vivacity which lost little by the repetition. And, as has been said the commotion and the dread of her was general throughout the kingdom. But it will readily be concluded that the districts nearest in turn to the fugitive out-cast experienced the greatest panic and abhorrence.

We must now visit a remote and thinly-inhabited parish in the west of England, of which almost all the inhabitants, at least of the middle and the lower orders, had passed an anxious and idle morning, under the apprehension that their neighbours would send the vagrant within the pale of their jurisdiction. A better illustration of the state of the people's minds can scarce be given, than to notice the fact, that, in expectation of Martha Hall's public entry, mothers, although they flocked towards the public road themselves, left behind them, under lock and key, such of their children as were young enough to be so controlled.

In one only humble house of the parish was the topic of general interest treated as it ought to have been. This was the dwelling of Laurence Hutchins, a man advanced in years, a widower, and, compared with older sojourners or with natives, a stranger. He had come from a distant county, with his wife, a little girl, and an infant son, only some seven or eight years before. Shortly afterwards his wife died, people said of a broken heart, the seeds of which malady she had brought with her to her new resi-

dence; and if Laurence Hutchins did not follow her to the grave, it was not that he too seemed not to share the hidden grief of his companion, but that his frame proved stronger than hers, or his mind more resisting, or, perhaps, that Providence had given him the nerve to endure life for the sake of his two orphans. The deepest sorrow, indeed, was fixed on his hard-featured, though not displeasing face; and all his actions, and his whole manner, agreed with its expression. He worked laboriously, as a common day-labourer, whenever he could get employment: in his disengaged hours, he dug or raked, or weeded, or planted, or transplanted in the little garden attached to his solitary cottage; but he made few acquaintances, and no companions: to those who knew most of him, little as that was, he spoke seldom, and never mirthfully: he had no person, male or female, to assist him in the many cares claimed at his hands by his two helpless children: if a visiter dropped in, although Laurence did not demean himself uncouthly, there was no welcome such as might induce a second call: and to sum up the opinion entertained of him by his surrounding friends, his poor cottage was termed "the sad house," and its master "sad Laurence."

And yet it was in this "sad house" that the expected arrival of Martha Hall within the parish bounds created no indecent commotion. From the time of the first report of the murder, down to the present morning, little Mima, or Jemima Hutchins, now a growing girl of about twelve, observed that her father never bestowed a word on the subject. He had listened, indeed, to the account of it given to the lonely family by a gossiping neighbour; but, when the tale was ended, Laurence only took his hat and spade and strode heavily into his garden. Mima, however, could not remain ignorant of the tidings which reached her secluded district day after day. If no other person acted as her informant, little brother Dick ran in to her, during her discharge of such household duties as she was now able to undertake, with the free translations of the newspaper, and other anecdotes, supplied to him, by urchins like himself on the roadside, or at "the steps,"

by the brook—a favourite rendezvous of the junior truants of the parish, as it was also the place where the girls of the adjacent cottages went to fill their pitchers for domestic uses.

Nor could Mima help feeling a portion of the excitement created in all around her by the exaggerated stories of the innocence of the executed man, the guilt of Martha Hall, and her flight from parish to parish, from town to town. Although the practical virtues and benevolence taught her by her father, always in act and deed, and sometimes in sound doctrine, hindered the child from fully sharing the thirst of persecution towards the fugitive, so ostentatiously encouraged in themselves and others by the good people who surrounded her, still she imbibed a strong aversion for the object of all hate and all loathing and felt a surpassing terror of coming in contact with her. These sentiments gained strength in her breast, from the necessity of keeping them to herself, and brooding over the chimeras they ingendered; for, though she could not tell precisely why, Mima would not renew the topic with her father, and she had no one else to claim confidence of, except her little brother of seven years, and he was nobody.

“The family of “the sad house” sat down to their frugal breakfast. One after another, idlers dropt in to report the news of Martha Hall’s approach from the neighbouring parish. Still Laurence Hutchins took no notice. Mima, however, listened eagerly and breathlessly. An additional piece of information did not increase her happiness. The last overzealous friend who came to unburden himself of his babbling at Laurence Hutchin’s hearth, strongly advised the melancholy man to keep his children within doors, and to stand at his threshold with a bludgeon in his hand, in order to obstruct the probable entry of the vagrant; inasmuch as the brook which ran by the falling ground at the back of his cottage was the boundary of the parish in that direction, and most likely Martha Hall would be driven in amongst them all at that point, or near it; and then she would make for “the steps,” and, up them, straight for the house, and so———

Laurence Hutchins again interrupted his obliging orator by putting on his hat and leaving the cottage, his little boy's hand in his, to cut rushes in a neighbouring marsh, for the purpose of making saleable mats of them.

The gossip sat a moment, much offended, opposite to Mima; then, starting at some ominous sound which, he said, reached him from a distance, also arose and left her alone.

Mima sat listening in great fear, more than once inclined to bolt the door and secure herself; but, hearing nothing to suggest immediate danger, and also recollecting that she ought not to barricade her father's house without his permission or advice, she continued fixed upon her stool. Presently she bethought herself of her forenoon duties, and, at a recurrence of the thought of the first and most necessary, poor Mima turned pale: it was to go down the bushy declivity at the back of the cottage, and fill a pitcher of water from the brook at the steps, wherewith to prepare her father's dinner: the very brook which, in that quarter, ran between her parish and the parish whence the execrated Martha Hall was to be expected; the very steps up which, in the opinion of their anxious visitor, she would most probably escape into new bounds.

At the first view the child deemed it to be impossible that she could run such a risk: but her father must not be left without his dinner at the usual hour; her good father, who, when she was a little girl, took care to have hers ready every day. Besides, would he deem her reasons for the omission of her duty sufficient? From a recollection of his habits of thinking and feeling, she believed not. And finally, after some time had worn away, she knelt down, as she had been taught to do from her infancy, and praying to God to be saved from harm, Mima lifted up her pitcher and took her way to the brook.

There were two distinct descents to "the steps," from the back of the house. At the bottom of the first ran a broad pathway, leading to the marshes whither her father had gone with little Dick to cut rushes. This pathway she gained, stepping firmly, if not courageously, and was mounting over the stile which would usher her upon the first of the rude steps leading down the second descent

to the water, when a distant uproar really reached her. She hesitated and stopped. The sounds grew louder. She was turning to race home again. Her father and her little brother appeared coming back from the marsh, having finished their work sooner than she had expected. As they must pass her, she waited for them. Laurence Hutchins expressed some surprise to find her loitering at the stile. She wept. He looked earnestly into her face, and took her trembling hand as he added—"But I see; you durst not go down to fill your pitcher, Mima, for fear of Martha Hall?"

Fresh tears were shed by Mima, and she could give no other answer. Her father patted her on the head, and continued:—"Trip down to the brook, my maid, however; do your duty, and fear no one: besides, why should you fear this poor woman?"

"I hate her more than I fear her, father!" replied Mima, the sudden liveliness of her manner emulating what she had seen among her christian neighbours.

"Hate her, Mima, do you?" pursued Laurence. "And who gave you the leave to hate *her*, or any living creature? Not Him who commands us to love all."

"All, father? even the guilty and the bad?"

"All, Mima—even the guilty and the bad; even them we are to love, though we hate the bad that is in them. But who says that Martha Hall is *so* bad? A judge and jury have believed her innocent of the great crime, at least, laid by less wise people at her door. Go down, my little maid, go down the steps and fill your pitcher; and go with courage. I will not even stay here to give you false heart. You will find me and little Dick in the house."

He fondled and kissed her as he spoke, a rather unusual manifestation of his love, though he was practically a very affectionate parent. This, and the reliance placed on her strength of mind, suddenly encouraged Mima; and dashing the tears from her eyes, she trotted down instantly to the brook's edge; and while Laurence Hutchins and his almost infant son turned away from the stile to pursue the easy path to their house, each carrying his bundle of rushes, she seated herself on the steps, laid her pitcher at her side, crossed her hands on her lap, and unconsciously indulged for an instant the pleasing

sensations which had so suddenly taken possession of her breast.

The clamour she had heard at the stile above, although unheeded during her conversation with her father, here came loudly on her ear. From the opposite side of the brook the ground swelled, though not so suddenly as at her own side, and ran for about a quarter of a mile, until it met a high road. It was a succession of stubble fields. From the high road, at its far edge, Mima heard the uproar. Her eyes eagerly turned in that direction. She was left but a short time in doubt. A crowd broke over the fence of the road into the most remote fields, shouting, yelling, groaning, and hissing, and came in almost a straight line towards her. She started up—but a thought of her father kept her stationary. The rabble rout drew nearer; some running on before Martha Hall, others at her side, others pressing upon her from behind; and all—men, women, boys, and young girls—all similarly engaged, pelting her with clods and mud, spitting in her face, cursing her and hooting her. The thrice unhappy woman was just protected, and no more, from their utmost fury, by two overseers, each of whom held one of her arms as they hurried her along; and by a beadle, who exerted himself to keep off the virtuous viragoes, and the manful husbands and fathers at her back. Exhaustion, terror, almost madness, stamped her ghastly features, her rolling eyes, and her parched and dust-clotted lips; blood stained her forehead, her long black hair streamed around her; her clothes were half torn off; her feet were bare, weather-cracked, and swollen; her step altogether uncertain: indeed, but for the support and tugging of the stout overseers, she must have fallen prostrate among the sharp stubbles. And such was the appearance of Martha Hall in her present plight; and yet more than half of Mima's dislike, remaining after her father's words, was conquered by that appearance. The child, shaping a phantom to suit her prejudices, had fancied the out cast into a personification of something monstrous, ugly, and horrible; now she beheld a woman not more than four or five-and-twenty, handsome featured, well formed, and looking no more like a murderess—

and a double murderess and traitress, too—than any other comely female she had before seen. Mima only felt that she looked scared almost to death, faint, and very wretched; although upon this feeling followed another—that she was barbarously treated.

They brought her to the edge of the brook, a few paces below the steps, on the opposite side. Until now, Mima had thought that she spoke not a word. At this close view, however, it was evident that her lips often moved in an effort to shape words, although her voice was only a hoarse, struggling whisper. Seemingly, she craved mercy—humbly, most humbly. A pause took place. The abhorred vagrant was to be forced across the shallow water: but how? Her bitterest haters did not appear inclined to wet their shoes, even to satisfy their magnanimity. “In with her! in with her alone!” arose the cry—“in with her! and we shall soon pelt her over to our neighbours!” and they gathered close and clutched her. The overseers resisted a little, as in duty bound. The wretch herself, with clasped hands, blood-shot eyes, bending knees, and cringing body, mutely implored: the next instant, screeching wildly, she was splashing in the water; and the next, stimulated as well by a dread of a shocking death, as by a shower of clods, sods, and stones, she had, with a desperate effort, scrambled across the brook, crawled up its easy bank, and disappeared among the trees and bushes which, at that point, thickly clothed the base of the ascent thence arising towards Laurence Hutchins’s house. Shortly afterwards, with a parting yell, her persecutors hurried back to the road from which they had come; the overseers and the beadle slowly followed, and little Mima was left alone on the steps.

Terrified, shocked, and now full of pity rather than of hate, the child dipped her pitcher in the brook, and hastened to her home. Half way up the steps, groans and hard breathing reached her from a clump of bushes to one side. She leaned, not without awe and some fear still, over the spot. Stretched upon her back, some distance beneath her, she saw Martha Hall. The woman was staring vaguely straight upward—her eyes and those of the child met—she started through her whole frame

—her glance became more intelligent—she half arose on her knees, grasped her hands together; and now, in the deep silence, Mima could distinctly hear her piercing whisper.

“Mercy! mercy and pity, young girl! Save me from them, over again! save me this time, only this time! Let me have a day—an hour—to breathe! *Here*—I ask no more than to lie *here*, and of you no more than not to tell them where to find me! O my maid! my maid! take compassion on me! You are young and innocent, and of *you* I beg some pity!”

“If I am innocent,” replied Mima, weeping, “are you as bad as they say?”

“No!” answered the suppliant, her vehement whisper forcing itself into a wheezing scream—“no! of blood I am free—I am, I am! and not for what they lay to my charge do I deserve this! though I *do* deserve it for great wickedness—for early disobeying and shaming a good father and mother—for sending them upon the world, wanderers, till they have gone I know not where—gone where I cannot find them—where I cannot find them, to lay my head at their blessed feet, and die! But, hush! does not some one come? Oh! will you, will you promise not to betray me?”

“No one comes—wait a moment,” answered Mima; and she hurried home, and told her father every word the woman had said. At the last words he seemed suddenly and greatly aroused, looked hard into Mima’s face, and said in a very low voice, “Go back to her, child, and ask her, as she hopes for the mercy of God or men, to tell you her real name and her birth-place: my mind mis-gives me that the name she bears is not her true one.”

Mima, though wondering at the nature of her commission, did as she was commanded; and having got the woman’s answers, returned to her father and said—

“As she hopes for mercy from God or from men, she sends you word that her real name is Mary Ware, and her birthplace a village in Devon.”

“Ay, Mima?” questioned the old man, shuddering, while his head drooped, and his eyes fell glaringly on the floor. “Come here, then, my maid; come here.” The

child went over to him: he took her hand strove, to continue speaking, closed his eyes, and fainted.

His child's cries called back his senses. Summoning up, with a great effort, self-command and presence of mind, his first endeavours were to calm her. When he saw her assured, Laurence Hutchins asked, "Is there not a cup of elder wine, and a mouthful of meat, since supper, last night, Mima?"

Mima, rapidly answering, "Yes," went to make hot the elder wine—often the poor English cottager's greatest luxury: and when she had done, she brought it, with a plate of cold meat and bread, to her father.

"Not for me, my little maid, not for me," he resumed: "take it to—*her*"—speaking in a constrained manner, and pointing through the back door; "and tell her she is safe for us: but talk no more with her till you have come back to me."

Mima returned from her errand, and found her father seated in the same spot, weeping. At her appearance, he strove to hide his tears, beckoning her to him with an extended hand and arm. A second time she came to his side. He put the arm round her neck, made her stand between his knees, and continued:

"The time has come, Mima. After believing that the offender had suffered for crime committed, I had hoped, mostly for your sake, my maid, that it would never come. But it has: and, because it has, listen to what I have prayed, morning and night, you should die without hearing from a living tongue. Listen to our shame, Mima. Eight years ago, she left her precious mother and myself; left us, after growing up, under our love and care, and in the love and fear of God, into a beautiful creature, the light of our eyes, the pride of our hearts, and the boast of our vain lips. Neither had her mind been neglected: for I was then in what is called a respectable way of life, and had received some education myself, and was therefore doubly able to attend to hers. But she left us, Mima, after being a child to us—and *such* a child!—for seventeen years. I own that her first temptation was not small. The man—the robber—was of rank in the world, young, handsome, and he promised her marriage—a secret mar-

riage —ay, and flattered even her old love for her father and mother by swearing to enable her to raise them above a chance of want all the days of their life.

“So much I have since learned ; though it was not from her I learned it—no, nor anything else ; for she would hold no intercourse with me after her elopement. I pursued her. The man’s servants turned me from his doors. I wrote to her : she did not answer my letters. Then came the news of his abandoning her : and then a terrible rumour of——no matter what. I believed in it for some time, because in no other way could I account for her still avoiding us. Well, my maid, you were four years old then ; and when your mother and I looked at you, we said to each other, ‘ This child is now our care : let us save her from the curse of her sister’s shame in after life : ’ and with that we left our native place, ruined in fortune on account of the numb that came over me, and changing our names we settled here. But your mother, Mima, could not bear up against it. She died, you know ; and I was left alone to meet this day.”

“Then, father,” said Mima, pale and trembling, “this woman, Martha Hall—that is, Mary Ware, I mean—”

“She is your sister my maid. You want to ask why I never mentioned her name before ? why, in fact, I never told you you had a sister ?”

“No, father, no ; I understand why now : you made me understand it when you began to speak. Are you able to come with me to her yet, father, and help her up to the house ?”

He groaned wretchedly, and then said—“I will at least hear her denials more at length of what she spoke of to you my child. But I must go alone ; and, before I go—” He walked into his little sleeping nook, leaving the sentence unfinished. But Mima knew what he meant, and as she went on her knees was sure that she joined him in prayer. Providence had been preparing some alleviation of misery for both.

The child was disturbed in her innocent devotions by the sound of men’s voices at the back of the house. Alarmed for her unfortunate sister, she sprang to her feet : her father, also startled, came out of his chamber. The ears of both were not allayed by meeting, on the thresh-

old of the back door, the overseers and the beadle of the next parish, proceeded by an elderly person in black, who seemed to be a clergyman. Nor did the question of one of the overseers appear to bode good.

"Have you seen the woman, Martha Hall, pass this way?"

Father and child could not conceal their embarrassment.

"Yes, you have seen her, thank God! for the poor creature's sake," said the clergyman. "Fear nothing my good people on account of your christian act towards her. She has undergone much, oh! much, much wrongfully; but her trials are over, she is proved innocent, and the proof having reached my hands, it became most peculiarly my duty to hasten after her upon her wretched pilgrimage, and save her from future persecution. Tell me good man is she not under your protection? in your house? and how has she borne her misfortunes? life not in danger? Where is she? let me see her. Oh, thank God that she is found!"

"Thank God!" repeated the father, and he staggered backward against the wall. Mima flew out of the cottage—he knew where.

"You seem greatly overcome by your first fears for her and yourself, master," continued the clergyman "but compose yourself, for I assure you again that there is nothing to apprehend."

"And so she is quite, quite innocent of it, sir!" demanded old Ware, grasping the hand which the good priest had kindly laid on his arm.

"You shall hear. You know the whole previous story, of course. You know that the declarations of the real culprit formed the chief grounds for the popular fury against the poor, unhappy, and greatly wronged woman.

"Poor, unhappy, and greatly wronged woman!" echoed Ware, and then added, "I do know, sir."

The clergyman went on.

"It was I who attended the miserable man in his last moments. I could not credit his assertions for reasons of my own. A subsequent event proved my judgment correct. The clothes of such a wretch as he was, became, after death the property of the almost as depraved being who executes the law's sentence. Weeks after the no-

minal husband of Martha Hall had expiated his hideous crime, a half-written letter, found in a secret pocket of his coat, was brought to me. It would seem that the murderer had been interrupted, almost in the act of writing it, by the officers who arrested him, and that afterwards it escaped his recollection; but we have proved it to be in his hand. It is addressed to a brother-profligate in London, and although the language is disguised, not only admits his commission of the crime for which he has suffered, but alludes, petulantly and savagely, to the vain interruptions he had received, during his perpetration of it, from Martha Hall. And now you know all, and will hesitate no longer in introducing me to the poor woman, that I may carry her, if she is able to be moved, to some asylum where she can be comforted, cherished, and saved in body and in soul."

"This is her asylum while she or I live, sir," answered Ware; "and here, and here alone, she shall be comforted, cherished, and, if we can, saved in body and in soul."

"Your intentions do you honour, my good friend; but let me ask you, do your circumstances allow you to offer her a home?"

Ware started, looked towards the overseers and the beadle, who stood at some distance, put his lips to the clergyman's ear, and replied—"Let me whisper you, sir. This is her home; and home will be home to her, be it never so homely."

"Walk out with me," resumed the clergyman, much moved. "What am I to understand?" he continued, when they stood alone in the open air: "is she anything to you?"

"She is my child, sir," answered Ware, as he covered his face with his hands.

A short explanation followed, and they went together in search of Mary Ware. Mima met them at the stile leading down to the brook. She was crying heartily, and yet smiling. Her sister had heard all she could tell. "And she expects you father," continued Mima: "and oh! pray make haste; for it troubles her so that I fear, I fear!"—

They quickened their pace, Mima running on before them, and disappearing at the bottom of the steps, into the

thicket. When they gained a sight of Mary Ware, her head dropped over her little sister's shoulders, who knelt beside her, her arms hung helplessly, and her eyes were closed. Her father embraced her before she seemed aware of his presence. At last she opened her eyes and fixed them on his: then a great change took place in her features, and she could no longer support herself on her knees. Evidently, however, she strove to speak, and after much dreadful struggling, whispered, "What word, father? what last word from you?"

"God forgive and bless my poor child as I do," answered Ware. Again she made a feeble and useless effort to utter seemingly a joyous and comforting ejaculation. "Come here, sir," resumed the father, addressing the clergyman, who stood apart. "She wants both our help now." The benevolent man understood him, knelt by his side, and prayed aloud. Ware repeated his words, as so did little Mima, though weeping convulsively. Mary seemed for many minutes aware of the sounds they uttered, and her voiceless lips moved too, as if her mind prayed. The father stopped suddenly as her head lay heavier on his shoulder, after a long sigh had escaped her. "She is dead, sir," he said in an even solemn tone.

"But saved," replied the clergyman.

"We hope it, sir; and I am not impatient under this ending of all her faults and sufferings. It pleases me better to hold her dead in my arms to day, than it could have done to have held her alive in them yesterday."

"Let me be your friend," sobbed the clergyman, grasping his hand.

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT.

AZINEB, the son of Omar, succeeded to his father's crown, at an early age ; and all his subjects, the old and wise men, as well as the unlettered and the humble, instead of withholding their confidence from his youth, blessed Alla and the Prophet for the prospect of a good and happy reign. For, although nineteen years had scarce rolled over the head of Azineb, he was known to be matured in wisdom and virtue. From his boyhood he had devoted himself to books, and the conversation of the learned and the accomplished ; his days and nights of study being relieved only by practising such manly and warlike feats and sports as would at once prepare him for probable future hardships in battle, and exercise the physical strength and skill with which God had blessed him, and which, therefore, were not to be permitted to remain uncultivated. So that, while few or none of his subjects, of his own years, rivalled Azineb in a knowledge of the grave literature of his country ; in science, in poetry, and, above all, in his Koran ; and while the wisest, the oldest, and the most religious men of his court, wondered at the sedateness and vigour of his discourse ;

he was also unsurpassed, if not unequalled, in graceful feats of horsemanship, in the use of the scimitar, and in courage and adroitness in hunting the lion, the leopard, and the tiger. His own hand had given the death blow to many of these ferocious animals; indeed, he bore home more of their skins than did any other adventurer of the chase; and yet so tempered with skill and prudence was his intrepidity, that from tusk or talon he had never received a wound.

The learned fathers of his mind were justly proud of their scholar, and boasted of his acquirements and talents, more than they did of their own:—it was whispered, however, by some satirist of the court, that they thus took the best way of ensuring royal tributes of admiration and gratitude to themselves. Another of Azineb's instructors might also be allowed to feel honoured in his pupil; namely, Mustapha, a man high in military command, and his master ever since childhood, (until the princely boy first equalled, and then eclipsed his own skill,) in warlike exercises and in the hunting-field. But whatever were Mustapha's inward feelings on this subject, he never boasted of his pupil, as did the more superior and revered men who had aided in forming the mental and moral excellence of the (so called) Royal wonder. Had any one raised a question of Azineb's manly prowess, he would have gainsayed the slander at the risk of his life; but he seemed too sure of the fact, to insist upon it; and of its general acceptance, to talk about it. Making it a theme of self-praise, either in vanity, or that his master might hear his speeches, and show a pleased consciousness of them, never entered into his mind. The sole privilege which Mustapha appeared to think he had acquired by his successful instructions of Azineb, was that of loving him the more; and in this love of the subject for the prince, was essentially included the zeal of serving him faithfully. And Azineb, understanding and feeling the claims of Mustapha, not only recognised and admitted his love, and afforded opportunities for its indulgence, but returned it, also, with his heart, and rewarded it with his bounty.

It was amazing if not irksome, to the philosophical, the poetical, nay, the pious colleagues of Mustapha, that, he

should succeed so well at court, merely by saying nothing on the topic which, of all others, seemed calculated, if well kept alive, to ensure him success. None of them got on better, if so well, by the contrary, and, as they argued, more advisable, rule of conduct. Their individual reveries on this point, for they were too wise to communicate, at present, their sentiments to one another, began to create a jealousy of Mustapha. And, upon the occasion of a grand banquet given by Azineb in the palace, in honour of all his former tutors, this jealousy rankled into something akin to hatred, in consequence of a particular mode of designation adopted by the prince towards his old riding-master.

During the feast, the young monarch proposed in succession the healths of his guests. One was his "most revered helper in reading the Koran;" another "his honoured tutor in astronomy;" a third, his "most useful assistant in languages;" a fourth, his "accomplished play-fellow in the bowers of poetry!" but Mustapha he simply called, "my faithful servant." And one would have thought that, by complimenting in their own polite style, each of Mustapha's rival's, Azineb had taken the best mean's of gratifying their laudible pride, and of leaving them nothing to complain of: and, indeed, so he had, until the proposal of his last toast; but that was too much for logic, rhetoric, rhyme, and piety, united: and from that hour, Mustapha had active enemies at court, and they at last began to make common cause against him.

The ethical sage of the cabal, sitting down to consider a plan for disgusting Azineb with his Faithful Servant, soon built up a formidable battery of syllogisms. His first assumption was a simple one, an axiom in fact, or something else more true, if possible, namely, "Azineb is very young." Then he proceeded to the following effect, though with greater order. "Very young, and blessed with robust health, and a vigorous constitution; consequently, notwithstanding his precocious philosophy, religion, and morality, containing within him all the springs of strong natural passions. Suppose some of these excited — what then? Mustapha is an austere man; a crabbed man; and somewhat of a rough spoken man: he deems he loves the

prince; would he relish Azineb's backslidings? would he let them pass without reproof? And then, how would the prince take his constant moralizing, either in its matter or manner?—Let us see.”——

The professor consulted his colleagues, and they admired his system, and pledged themselves to each other to carry it into effect. The master of belles lettres began the attempt. He composed beautiful verses in praise of the most lovely and fascinating maiden of the royal city, and sang them, and caused them to be sung repeatedly in the presence of Azineb. From admiring the poetry, the prince unconsciously was led to ask questions about its object, and received answers which heightened his curiosity. In due time, the charming Zobeide supped at the palace; and after an evening of song, smiles, roses, perfumes, music, wit, and wine, her youthful entertainer proved mortal; and so far were verified the inverted ethics which conjectured this event.

Little was now necessary but to continue an application of excitements, sufficient not only to satisfy the cravings of new-born passions, but also to smother the occasional pangs of remorse; and the conspirators were not idle in their duty. Day by day, step by step, Azineb surrendered himself into the arms of sensual pleasure and licentious enjoyments. To his great comfort—for during his first hours of repentance he had feared the contrary—neither the moralist nor the divines of his council troubled him with their reprehensions. As they had calculated, however, there was one man who did exercise the duty of affliction towards his royal master.

Not after the first lapse of Azineb, nor yet after his third or fourth, were the unwelcome hints of Mustapha addressed, notwithstanding, to his ear. The beloved and princely boy had sinned long, and impulses were on the verge of becoming habits, (hideous change!) before his Faithful Servant uttered a word of expostulation, and then, indirectly, he would say, “The wisest man, in his youth, is made weak. Who therefore wonders? It is so.”—Again. “When the young man is wise and virtuous, and has fallen into no snares, the old bless him, though they wonder, and say the snares have not been spread

in his path."—Or, at another time, "The stumblings of the good, and the sins of the hardened in evil, are two things. It is so."——

To such gentle admonitions Azineb gave little heed, though he lent them an ear. The temptations to disregard them were too strong for their refraining tenderness. By degrees, the sincere Mustapha grew bolder in the stern task of love: but his idolized prince had become less sensitive of admonition, and still he produced no effect. He gained his utmost possible point of reproof, beyond which even his feelings dared not to pass; and now Azineb heard him impatiently, because he was still more self-devoted to licentiousness, and therefore still more removed from sympathy with Mustapha's heart. The sole thing he could or would eventually distinguish was the uncouthness of his monitor's manner; and this he called rude, at first, and then bold, and at last audacious; knowing not, or seeing not, that here he was confounding manner and motive, and so misrepresenting true friendship.

The learned and accomplished conspirators could not long remain ignorant of such a change in Azineb's sentiments towards his "faithful servant;" for exactly such a change they had hoped to produce, and were watchful accordingly. And thereupon they sharpened other weapons for Mustapha's overthrow. The poet took an occasion to exhibit, garishly, the old soldier's lack of accomplishments, by calling upon him for an impromptu, of which all the world knew he did not even comprehend the nature; and Azineb, to whom, at that moment, the power of saying a witty thing in verse was a great talent, (because he could excel in it himself, and because it hit the vein of the hour,) joined in the scoff against his old friend's simple rejection of the challenge. Upon a less elated occasion, he agreed with the astronomer, that any man who was ignorant of at least the rudiments of heavenly science was a disgrace to the cabinet of a civilized court; and it was not long till he listened to an insinuation of Mustapha's orthodoxy, originating with the sage of the Koran, the uncle of the last unrivalled beauty who had been introduced to the royal palace.

In fact, Azineb soon admitted, nay believed, or thought he did, that for many weighty and virtuous reasons he ought to dismiss Mustapha from court, and confine him to a provincial military command, hundreds of miles distant; and yet a cowardliness of purpose, the common attendant curse of the sensual, or else a lingering recollection at his heart, hindered him from issuing the necessary order. Meantime, he tried to palter with the embarrassment. His queen of the hour would be amused by assuming a part in a tiger or lion hunt; and he desired Mustapha to prepare for taking the field, upon a certain day, with extraordinary pomp and preparation; supposing that his old tutor might thus be diverted from present thoughts into the bias of former enthusiasm.

Upon the morning of the appointed day, the hunting cavalcade left the palace in as much pomp, as Asiatic gorgeousness ever witnessed. The beauty and trappings of the Arabian coursers, the highly-ornamented castles of the elephants, the surpassing splendour of the palanquin which contained Azineb's reigning favourite,—beside which the youthful prince rode upon a steed of unmatched proportions and fleetness,—the bands of music, the ensigns, all formed a magnificent spectacle,

Intelligence has just been gained that a lion had descended, the night before, upon the herd of a neighbouring noble, and, after having been surprised and scared from his prey, had retreated into an adjacent wood. Those skilled in the knowledge required for a good hunt, decided that he should be tracked, roused, and challenged in his temporary lair, because they concluded that his balked appetite would render him peculiarly disposed to manifest the true spirit of his nature. Mustapha, the conductor of the sport, agreed to these reasons and arrangements, and the cavalcade accordingly got into motion for the wood pointed out by the guides.

It was approached across an almost barren plain, scorched by the sun, and scantily studded here and there with sharp rocks, which afforded root, among their crevices, to some meagre shrubs and blades of brown grass. A broad and rapid river divided this plain from the leafy retreat of the lion, and was to be crossed only by a rude

bridge, a good distance up its stream from the cavalcade's line of advance. The middle of the wood, deemed to be the beast's couching-place, was, however, straight before the hunters, close by the river's opposite bank; and a flat country, stretching to the right and to the left from its skirts, and a gentle ascent beyond and above it, showed the only ground over which, after having been scared from his lair, he could be pursued. As all stopped on the sterile plain, some distance from the near bank of the turbulent water, Azineb understood, at a glance, that upon this spot he ought to halt his beautiful favourite; for from it she could fully see any possible turn of the chase, excepting the start in the wood, without sharing one of its perils; and he accordingly gave orders to have her palanquin rested, its bearers halt, and a body of horse form around her, while he turned to cross the bridge, with his attendants, and so approach the wood.

Mustapha had been considering the opposite ground as attentively as his master, and, from his own conclusions, respectfully objected to the proposed arrangement, so far as concerned the safety of the lady. The wood was not thick, he said: it afforded numerous temptations to an angry lion to break through it, regardless of any line of men who might be left to guard its edges; in reasonable anticipation, the beast they were about to rouse would prefer attempting a return to the prey from which he had been scared the previous night, to a retreat into the hungry wilderness he had abandoned upon his late adventure.

Rendered obstinate by his self-opinion, Azineb laughed at this advice. Whispers from some of Mustapha's enemies prompted him to treat it even more despotically. He told Mustapha that he believed it arose rather from a design to betray the lady into danger, than to save her from possible harm.

"Then Mustapha will watch by the palanquin to share the dangers of his own treachery."

To this, still prompted by a whisper, Azineb made a cruel and tyrannical retort. "The old hunter fears for himself," he said.

"If Mustapha has taught the young hunter to fear for himself, it is so," replied Mustapha, with more spirit than

the highest subjects were allowed to use towards an Asiatic prince; and he had not spoken the words when Azineb struck him on the shoulders with the flat of his sabre, and ordered him to quit the hunting ground and retire down the bank of the river. A great struggle was seen in Mustapha's features, and his hand involuntarily moved towards his own sabre; but pure love of the royal boy whom he had often helped to his saddle, and pure love alone, subdued all his majestic wrath, and making a low salutation, he rode slowly in the direction in which he had been commanded to go.

He halted, about the same distance from the palanquin, down the stream, as was the bridge from it, towards the water's source. Proud, bitter and yet tender tears filled his eyes. At first he felt no wish to notice the proceedings of the pompous and gallant train from whom he had been ignobly banished. Their music and their cries aroused his interest, however, and he glanced to the bridge and then to the wood: the greater number were just entering the latter, after having stationed a weak line round its skirts. Farther he could not observe the chances of the hunt: but the continued cries, now of a changed cadence, which broke from the lion's umbrageous lair, told his experienced ear, first, that the animal had been tracked; next that he had been seen and dared; next, that his anger had been roused into an attack upon his assailants: and the ensuing sound Mustapha heard was the explosive, almost crashing roar of the terrific beast himself, as he sprang out of the wood, overwhelmed two or three of his scared enemies on its outposts, and plunged into the river exactly opposite the bank where the palanquin rested.

His fiery eyes were scarcely seen glaring in the water, by the horsemen left to guard the lady, ere they fled across the plain like one of its own hurricane-blasts; the equally frightened horses not requiring spur or whip to urge them to utmost speed. Then Mustapha heard piercing shrieks issue from the palanquin, and saw its glittering silk curtains shaken violently in the sun, and white arms tossed in agony through their openings towards the wood. The following instant, Azineb's wor-

shipped one, and all her young slaves, ran, still screaming, along the river's bank, approaching the point where Mustapha had stationed himself. "She is very young and beautiful," muttered Mustapha, "and but for *him* would have been innocent. He loves her too," he continued, as in answer to her startling calls, the young prince just then issued from the wood, and casting his eyes abroad over the river, began—after bounding forward a few steps—to return her cry for cry, tear his hair, rend his garments, beat his breast, and exhibit all the actions of utter anguish and despair. For now the lion gained the confronting bank; and as Azineb and all his attendants had left their horses at the bridge, pursuit was useless, "Loves her," resumed Mustapha, "as the apple of his eye; loves her, even as he hates me. What then?" he took another glance at the terrified girl. From excessive fear or lack of strength, she had been left far behind by her slaves, and the lion, evidently selecting her as an object of vengeance, closed fast upon her—"What then?"—Mustapha made but a moment's pause when he added, "It will be so. He shall see it—" and suddenly taking off a loose part of his dress, he threw it over his courser's eyes, to hinder him from seeing the lion, and galloped amain to meet the poor fugitive.

Shouts, in applause of his heroism, arose from the prince and many of the attendants: and Azineb now ran along his own side of the river, towards the bridge, obviously bent upon seconding, if possible, the daring attempt of Mustapha. During his hurry thither, accompanied by his hunters, he lost sight of the appalling scene: when he and they had remounted, and crossed the bridge, Mustapha held his prize before him on the saddle. Again all shouted tremendously, now to overawe the lion, and turn him from his unremitted pursuit. The enraged beast paused an instant; looked back upon them; and then as if ascertaining that the distance between them and him allowed him scope for his present purpose, uttered a roar of defiance, and renewed his bounds after Mustapha. And that roar gave him fearful odds. Hitherto, Mustapha's steed had not been aware of his proximity, for his eyes were hood-winked: now he *heard*

the voice of the king of beasts, and it was enough. Swerving aside he shook the piece of drapery from his eyes, and with tottering and failing limbs remained paralysed. Again and again Azineb and his train uttered wild cries, and urged on their own fear-stricken coursers. "It is vain!" shrieked the prince, "Behold!—Yet shout, still! shout!"

The lion had sprung against the side of Mustapha's horse, and fastened upon a limb of the rider. Mustapha saw him prepare for his last bound, and with one arm holding her up, and another holding her back, endeavoured to place his charge out of immediate danger. It gave him pleasure instead of pain, when he felt the beast's fang tearing his own flesh. "Come on!" he exclaimed, to the approaching hunters; "I can hold her till ye vex him away from us!" They jumped from their saddles, and ran forward with spears and scimitars. Mustapha felt his strength failing, and his eyes growing heavy, and his frame cringing, in spite of him; for the lion had now fastened his tusks in his body. But he faintly caught the sound of more feet, and louder cries; and was sensible of being released by the lion: the next moment he recognised the prince's voice, making quick inquiries, and could just utter, "She is untouched to the hair of her head—Mustapha, whom you love no longer, says it;" when he fell from his saddle, dead,

That day won Azineb back to virtue, but it lost him his Faithful Servant.

THE ROMAN MERCHANT.

THE Norman and Welsh Lords of the Pale, in Ireland, determined, in the first instance, upon building themselves in from the natives of the country in which they colonized ; that is, at such seasons as they did not deem convenient for voluntary rencontre in the field, or by wile, with their detested neighbours. The rudely-wrought and ungraceful square castles, without adjunct of any kind, which to this day are found in the Pale districts of Ireland, were the results of their earlier attempts to indu'ge this love of solitude. Soon after, walled towns sprang up in the land, still to keep out all pure-blooded descendants of Heber and Heremon. But this could not last. The general similarities of human nature began, in the course of time, to attract and approach each other among the two people. Common wants, suggesting common interests, had the usual and inevitable effect of leveling the barriers of exclusiveness on the one hand, and of qualifying hatred on the other ; and long before Cromwell's devastating visit to Ireland, neither double-curtained walls, nor lines of circumvallation, nor massive gates, nor yet laws stronger than any of these, were able to keep the Anglo-Normans and the mere Irish from mixing comfortably together.

It may appear, however, that the natives were not all at once received into the bosoms of the towns and cities of the strangers, even when liberality and common sense had begun to legislate in their favour. Most probably, they were only permitted at first to settle *extra muros*, and there erect dwellings of their own. By degrees, that part of the wall of the Pale-town running between the two communities was thrown down, or suffered to fall into decay; and the quickly-blending races then agreed to let one continued wall enclose and protect both.

In this manner two towns would have become a single town, known to the world by a single name. And such was the case with respect to Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Kilkenny, and other places of considerable and even of much less note in the west, the south and the middle of Ireland. Either a relic of the old spirit of making distinctions, or else common parlance, continued, however, to designate separately the two clusters of houses thus massing together, by the names of English-town and Irish-town; or else, while that quarter originally English was distinguished by the geographical name equally applying to both, the streets of Milesian architecture retained their mere Irish title.

And this "distinction without a difference" (no common-place quotation,) exists at the present day; and so we arrive at our story.

The Irish-town of our dear and not uncelebrated native city is now before our eyes, as vividly as when we roamed through it in childhood. One side of its main street reposes in the sun-shine of a sunny Saturday. (Why has the word occurred?—rather, why ask that question?—what reader who has been a school-boy will not comprehend the associations that suggest it? A sunny Saturday!—school dismissed at noon—the whole day and evening, ay, and the next day too, lengthening out before our minds in a most luxurious prospect of leisure and enjoyment—and the blessed sun shining! Oh! to this hour, a sunny Saturday wears its own peculiar radiance to our eyes, and gladdens our heart like a very act of happiness!—But we must describe—not be guilty of sentiment.)

We have said that the main street of *our* Irish-town appears to us this moment, as vividly as when we were children; yet not exactly so. Memory is at best but a camera-obscura, in which, though there be true forms, there are sobered colours and subdued lights; even the sunlight cannot be brought to mind in it as brilliant as in reality it has been. It is promised, however, that our little sketch shall be faithful enough. And so, look once more down the main street. The sunny side shows a straight line of humble houses—some very humble—the most considerable not more than two stories high; they are all old, or oldish, and here and there runs up a gable-front with round stone chimneys, that speaks of absolute antiquity. And they are all the abodes of shop-keepers—not a single gentleman's hall-door, with a heavy brass knocker, is to be seen in the row; and some of these honest men ("comfortable" folk, neither affluent, nor struggling like certain of their contemporaries "in town," who figure, or try to figure, on a larger scale,) are standing at their thresholds, talking across to their opposite neighbours, or leaning over their closed half-doors doing the same thing; and they happen to be almost all of an age, and that age some fifty years; and you may perceive, in the fashion of their respectable clothes and in their sleek three-curl wigs, as well, indeed, as in the characters of their faces, a sober attachment to the usages and to the mind of old times, which strikingly distinguishes them from their brethren only a few streets off. The narrow flag-way before their shops is worn from age, rather than from the bustle of the street at any time. Even upon this day, at noon, there is little crushing or pushing by their doors. When one of the respectable householders raises his voice, you can hear him talking, from the steps going up to the cathedral, all the way to the little bridge that connects the street, quite at the other end with the English-town; the shouts, cries, gabble, laughing, and crying of the urchins who are at play in the middle of the road, make the air ring; and when a horse trots over the stones, or a cart or car rolls over them, you would think the little old houses were about to tumble down with the noise.

This outline bears date some—no matter how many

—years ago. Enough to say that we were schoolboys when we studied (unconsciously indeed) the original. A grand-uncle, then about sixty, told us he remembered the Irish-town just the same when *he* was a boy. It may hence be inferred that the present sketch will stand good for from seventy to eighty years, past and gone, according to the reader's good-natured allowance for our objection to be called middle-aged. And so, seventy or eighty years ago, we are in the main street, seeing nearly the same houses, shop-windows, and shop-doors, and nearly the same kind of shopkeepers standing at them, or leaning cross-armed over them, which have already been described. It is past noon, too, and the summer-sun is uncloudedly shining.

Amid all the quiet and listlessness of the little street, a remarkable man, leading a small cart, drawn by an ass, entered it by a cross-street, at the country side of the Irish-town, and attracted immediate attention. He wore a costume which, to whatever nation or tribe it belonged, proclaimed him a stranger, not only in that town, but in Ireland. This consisted of a loosely-fashioned great-coat, of a brown colour, reaching nearly to his toes, secured tightly at his throat, and girt round his middle with a leathern belt and buckle; of russet boots, falling in folds to his ankles; and of a head-dress of red linen, or some such cloth, wound round and round his forehead. Having turned the corner of the street, he raised his eyes, which had been previously fixed on the ground, as if to note the situation of a little inn, to which he might have been directed; and then the interest of the shopkeepers of Irish-town increased ten-fold. Those eyes were very large, deep black, sad, mysterious, and yet tranquil; his nose was long, slightly hooked, and prominent; his cheeks and whole visage swarthy and thought-worn: but what most attracted notice was his short, thick, coal-black beard, which completely hid his chin, and his mouth almost, and when again he bent his head to his breast, made a black spot even on the surface of his dark-brown robe. Those who looked at him could not call him old, nor even advanced in years, though they hesitated to call him young. His pace was as heavy as his face seem-

ted to be serious. The dust of travel was on his dress, his hair, his whiskers, and slightly on that strange beard. Although he appeared leading the little cart, no one thought of classing him with the vulgar of any country, who perform such humble offices; nay, whether from natural character, or from former rank, he impressed himself as a person of a vague superiority. His cart was well loaded with trunks, boxes, and bales packed in sackcloth or in matting.

It seemed, that the one glance he gave, after entering the street, assured him of the point to which he walked: for, as if content with it, he passed along the middle of the way, looking neither to the right nor to the left, nor, indeed, again lifting up his eyes. If he were conscious of the general attention he attracted, he was also indifferent to it. The little inn was the last house but one to the bridge, at the farther end of the street. He gained the open gate-way which led into its stable-yard; halted his ass; turned his face towards the opposite houses; fixed his regards on one—a very humble one—of which the closed door and shutters told that it was uninhabited and to be let; wiped his heated brow with the wide sleeve of his gaberdine; and then, still taking not the least notice of the many curious eyes bent upon him, again put his hand to his ass's halter, and led it to one of the stables of the inn.

More than one of the shopkeepers of Irish-town, after debating with their neighbours the probable country, rank, profession, and religion of the stranger, passed over to the inn to hold consultation on the same points with its shrewd and observant landlady. But they only found her as much surprised and as curious as they were themselves. Her new guest, after seeing his little beast well disposed of, had summoned her servants to unload his cart, and caused them to convey its trunks, boxes, and packages into a private room: and then, placing a purse in her hands, retired after his property, ordering a frugal dinner. Since that moment, neither she nor any one in her house had seen him. He kept his door locked, and objected to open it till the hour of dinner. His language was English,

broadly marked with a foreign accent and idiom ; yet he made himself sufficiently intelligible.

Conjecture continued at a stand for many hours. At last, in the cool of the evening, the good folk of Irish-town saw the same man issue from the inn, dressed like one of themselves, his beard gone, and a decent three-cocked hat on his head, instead of the unchristian-looking pile of red linen. He crossed the little bridge, and passed "into town." Again his landlady was consulted, and her answers, while they gave more information than before, caused more surprise. At dinner he had asked of her the name and residence of the proprietor of the house which was to be let in the street, and noted down both in his tablets ; and after his meal, he a second time went up to his chamber ; their cut and shaved off his beard, and changed his dress ; when he had done dressing, locked his door on the outside ; and finally left her house as her neighbours had observed, without speaking another word.

This unknown, and perhaps infidel and dangerous wanderer, was about to become, then, a citizen of Irish-town ! And what were his means of support, and what were they to be ? Would he live in the house as a private gentleman, or would he open the shop and carry on some business ? If so, what business ? The well-laden cart here occurred to the thoughts of his future neighbours, and good-hearted and straight-minded people as we wish them to be believed, it will not be wondered at, if fears of rivalry, and (considering that the stranger must have travelled much, and seen many markets) of eclipsing rivalry, too, made some of them look grave.

Perhaps the least liberal among them it was who started the comforting thought, that the proprietor of the uninhabited house might "look two ways," before he consented to accept a tenant of such a questionable description ; and different opinions were exchanged on this point, when the stranger re-appeared, crossing the little bridge, followed by the clerk of the attorney, who did legal business for the gentleman whom he had gone to seek. Both gained the house in question, and at its threshold the clerk handed a key to his companion, and wished him a good

evening; the new comer unlocked the door and entered the premises, which had now evidently become his.

In a short time he was seen standing at the door, looking up the street. An upholsterer and two of his apprentices came in view, bearing a few of the most necessary articles of household furniture. He beckoned to them: they passed into his house, as if to arrange their goods. He went over to the inn; returned with all its spare hands carrying the baggage of his cart; and before nightfall he had secured his door, and he was alone in his house, the light of a candle shining through the chinks of one of the windows. That was a memorable night in the charitable club-room of Irish-town.

The earliest riser among his neighbours, next morning, saw his shop open, and an ample stock of various articles handsomely disposed in its little bow window, and hanging at its door. These consisted of a strange medley:—woollen and linen; cheap showy jewelery; tobacco and snuff; books and pamphlets; knives, scissors, needles, and such matters; ready-made shoes and boots; and flaunting coloured engravings, mostly of divine or sacred subjects. All Irish-town were soon up and stirring; and, one by one, his competitors walked observantly by his door, or entered his new establishment, in a more blunt and friendly manner, to wish him good morrow and a welcome. They found him sitting behind his counter gravely, and like a man of business “taking stock,” as they believed, in a large book. He received all his visitors politely, and if he did not return their smiles or good-humoured sayings, he was not backward in replying to their merely complimentary or friendly expressions. All curious inquiries about strange articles in his shop he answered off-hand and satisfactorily. He was asked if he proposed to stay some time among his new neighbours; and he said—“I hope so; I have taken the house for seven years.” Was he not a foreigner? “Yes; a native of Rome.” And his name? “Bartolini.”

When public anxiety has been pretty well allayed, the old householders of Irish-town began to compare opinions upon the stranger; and notwithstanding previous prepossessions, and even a present certainty that he must

prove a formidable rival to more than one long-established shop in the street, no man said or felt that he disliked Bartolini. The sad suavity and unpretending composure of his manners were openly admired; then, the irresistible conclusion that he was a friendless wanderer, who had suffered much, gained him pity; and a vague sense of mystery completed the simple interest raised in his favour. As to his name, it was judged to be, indeed, foreign enough; so much so, that plain Irish tongues could scarce be expected to get round it; and after various laughing attempts to pronounce it as he had done, his friends, as they said, "left it to himself to go through the trigonometry of it." But as he had informed them that he was a native of Rome, this fact and his present occupation suggested a substitute appellation; and in a few days Bartolini went by the name of "The Roman Merchant," and never afterwards was otherwise designated.

The first morning of his residence in Irish-town he went out among his neighbours to purchase provisions for breakfast and dinner, and he conveyed them home with his own hands. From this it was concluded that he meant to live quite alone, without a servant: and such, indeed, proved to be the case. Neither man nor woman, girl nor boy, resided, during his life, under his truly solitary roof. When the night of that morning drew on, he put up the shutters of his shop-window, secured them, locked his door, and walked forth, as if for exercise. Close by the corner of the street by which he had entered Irish-town, it has been passingly said, were steps which led up to the cathedral. These, a long flight, he was observed to ascend. Then he passed into the churchyard of the venerable and beautiful edifice spoken of, by a small door, at that time always left open—through it, and out of it by another door at its opposite side—thence into the suburb, and the open country; and returned to his residence in about two hours, and went to rest for the night.

"His proceedings on this day are minutely mentioned, because for years, he scarce ever made any alteration in them, from sunrise to sunset, winter or summer. It is to be particularly observed, that a solitary stroll invariably closed his day of serious and unremitting attention to his

shop ; add to which he was often noticed in the cathedral church-yard, for a longer time than seemed necessary to pass through it into the adjacent environs of Irish-town. The only occasions upon which he was not found behind his counter or met in the street purchasing his breakfast or dinner, or seen upon his evening walk, were when he was absolutely absent, for a while, in Dublin, or elsewhere, laying in a new stock of goods ; and then the Roman Merchant's house remained shut up, till his return with a fresh pile of bales in his little ass's cart.

Soon after his settlement in Irish-town he was more than once invited to a neighbour's house ; he declined the civility with his usual blandness, but so firmly and gravely as to put an end to future solicitations. He asked no one to his house ; and, in fact, from the night it became his, until he was no longer master of it, it never was entered by any one, except by the customers, or chance visitors of his shop. Proposals were made to him to become a member of the charitable club of the parish. He readily consented and sent in treble the amount of the specified subscription but never went to the club-room ; and here it may be mentioned, that to the poor of every description, to the wandering beggar at his door, and to distressed objects in the suburbs, he gave liberally and continually. And thus passed his life, for years ; holding no communication with his kind, beyond what a return of mere passing good manners demanded of him ; indeed, never speaking but when spoken to ; a true hermit though not of the desert ; a man esteemed and thought well of, though, from year to year, still as much unknown, and as much a mystery to his neighbours, as he had been the first day of his appearance in the street.

It was more than five years after his coming to Irish-town, that, one morning, the Roman Merchant's shop appeared shut at an unusually late hour. People wondered, but supposed he had overslept himself. Hours wore away, and still he was not seen engaged, as usual, in taking down his shutters. They knocked loudly at his door—they thundered at it ; no one stirred within. A little alarmed they began to surmise that he might have gone

to purchase goods before day-break ; for it was winter-time.

To ascertain this point some went to the cabin of an old woman who took care of his ass and cart. The ass and cart were under their shed, in her yard ; of course, he had not left the town, as had been supposed, as he never did so without them. Consternation as to his fate took possession of the minds of his neighbours.

Noon came ; night was drawing on ; authorities of the borough caused his house to be forcibly entered ; he was not in it ; he had not slept in his bed the previous night, for it was undisturbed after having been made up. In his little back parlour an humble supper was found laid out, a bottle of water to one hand, his single chair placed to the table, and the ashes of a turfen fire on the hearth. All his property seemed untouched. Every thing was sealed up, the house again secured, and inquiries set on foot in all directions.

Days elapsed and he was not heard of. The moment and the circumstances, at and under which he had at last been seen, now were carefully established. His street neighbours, the night before his disappearance had noticed him locking his shop door, and then going towards "the long steps," upon his accustomed walk. Other individuals had met him in the suburbs afterwards ; and one had seen him at a late hour, roaming through the churchyard. No farther could be accounted for.

At about the end of a week spent in vain searches and conjectures some youths of the suburbs were amusing themselves, vaulting over the tomb-stones in the churchyard of the cathedral. It was evening, and the winter's moon began to rise,* shining ghastly over a light sheet of snow, which for some days had covered the ground. They recollected what description of place they were so merry in, and half serious, half in jest, began to banter each others superstitious misgivings. One stepping back in mock terror upon his companions, pointed to a far cor-

* Since writing the above, we have returned to the scene of the story and been informed that we made an important omission, as regards the moon, in this part of it ; for that, upon the night of the discovery of the body of the Roman Merchant, the planet, strange enough to say, was eclipsed.

ner among the stems of two rows of trees, and said that "the spirit of the Roman Marchant was watching them!" All took to flight in laughing confusion, along the narrow pathway, pushing and jostling each other. Two of them slipped on the snow, and fell to one side among the graves. Their kicking and struggling displaced a loose and carelessly heaped mound, and the hand and arm of a man, gloved and clothed, started up between them, from the earth. They were the hand and arm of the Roman Merchant. The fact was established when, by the light of lanterns and torches, a crowd, whom their cries had summoned, disinterred the body.

It was fully dressed. Even the poor man's hat was found in his ill-made grave. Closer investigation showed that along with the key of his shop, his purse had been left in his pocket, his old-fashioned but valuable watch in his fob, and a mourning ring of value too, upon his finger. They touched something hard at his breast—it was the handle of a dagger, which they could not at first pull out; the blade traversed the middle of his heart, and its point appeared at his back. The death blow had been unerring and vehement, and must have killed him before he could have felt it.

Who struck it? that was the question of every tongue, but it remained unanswered. It remains unanswered to the present hour; although the motives of the unknown assassin are darkly imagined and hinted at, whenever this true and unvarnished story is related—and it is still related in our Irish-town.

The fact of finding his money, watch, and ring, untouched upon his person, removed the first natural suspicion that the Roman Merchant had been set upon in a thirst of plunder. It then became almost evident that hatred or revenge alone could have done a murder, of which the object was life—poor life, only: and of the primitive community whom he had chosen for his last earthly associates, not a heart or mind was found to attribute to its neighbour either of these baleful sentiments against the Roman Merchant. It was known and felt that although he had not permitted that close and continually intimacy which produces lively feelings of friend-

ship, all had respected him for his demeanour, admired and esteemed him for his charities, and compassionated him, as well for his hermit-life, as for the unexplained misfortunes that must have influenced and shaped it. In what direction, then, was the deadly enemy to be sought? The dagger, when unsheathed from his heart, suggested the first vague elucidation of the mystery. It was at once seen not to be of Irish, or even of English manufacture; and an old military gentleman of the city, a native, who, after half a life of foreign service, had returned to repose himself among his early friends, unhesitatingly pronounced it to have been made in Spain, by a hand well known to him, and to others who wrought with such tools. But other evidence, much more important, though still not giving clue to the identity of the murderer, came to light.

The Roman Merchant's little abode was again entered by competent authority. A more careful and minute search took place in it, after any documents likely to tell who he really was, and who might have been his early friends and connexions in a distant land. In the drawer of his desk was found a sealed packet, with a superscription in a foreign language, which none of the persons then present could translate. An old friar, half hiding in the suburbs, from the enactments of the time, was summoned to their councils; he had been a Salamanca student; he declared the direction on the back of the packet, as well as the writing in the body of it, to be Spanish; and he supplied the following translation: first convincing all that the writing was dated only some days before, from the residence of the murdered man.

“To my ruthless and terrible enemy:—

“You are upon my track again! After more than five years of quiet, gained by successfully eluding you, you are upon my track again! After escaping you seven times, in the four quarters of the globe, you have hunted me into this little nook of earth!—I know it—I am sure of it! Your blood-hound has crossed my path—the subtle devil whom you always sent forth to course after me through deserts and cities, over the most silent places, and into the thickest abodes of men, to mark me, and to fix me

for your blow. I have once more seen him! This very day, though he does not think it—ay, beneath all his consummate disguises of feature and of person, I knew his eye!—this very day, among a crowd of humble peasants in my little shop, and at the very moment that he bargained with me for one of the paltry articles, by the sale of which to them I gained the only bread you have left me—this very day, he and I stood face to face. And now he has gone to tell you he has found me, and you will surely come for the last time! Yes!—my relentless enemy!—my fate!—my destruction cloud!—already you have cast forward your thick shadow upon me!

“You will come for the last time, I say. Ay, for the last time; because I will not try to baffle you now. Heretofore I exerted the utmost skill and energy of man to save your soul from future fire (yes—you will die without regretting it!) and my own life from your hand, because I had injured you—because you were *her* blood—because she prayed for *you* to her God in heaven, and forgave *me*—and because, penetrated with a Christian’s sorrow for the past, it was my duty, as well as my heart’s great yearning, to preserve my wretched existence from one who had well forewarned me of his thirst to end it. But now, if after five years’ time for thought, you come—after sending me out, a Cain upon the earth—after taking from me name and rank, fortune, friends, a country, human-kind—after using your power and your sway to disgrace and beggar me—after trampling me, treading me with your heel, down, down into the dust—if now, once more, you come, let it be for the last time! I cannot save you—it is doomed! Or, perhaps, notwithstanding my uncharitable fear of the stoniness of your fierce heart, perhaps my life alone stands between you and the capability of feeling forgiveness and remorse: perhaps, when you can see me stretched stiff at your feet—perhaps then, and then alone, it is decreed that you may relent—that out of the last of my earthly punishment will grow the first of your earthly repentance. Come, then!

“And yet, have I not already been punished enough? Oh, very hard has been my life since I injured you!

That you have sent me out to earn my bread in the sweat of my brow—me, nursed on the very knee of luxury and honour—I count as nothing. So much, at least, I can thank you for. Humility, in all things, became my quick and full sense of my sin, and it has been my only solace. But remember!—your hand has, before now, struck sharp steel into my body; and when you thought I fell to rise no more, whose foot spurned me?

“Yet why remonstrate with you on this paper?—you can never read the words I write, nor hear them read, till you have shed my blood; and I *do* write them, only to hint to the christian people who shall find my lifeless body, some shadowy explanation of the cause of my coming death. Give me no praise for suppressing your name, and all allusions that might lead to a discovery of it. An angel—and your child—your only, only child, (alas! alas!—strike home when you strike next!—I merit it!)—she now watches my heart and its workings, and she can feel, if you cannot, why, at more than the hazard of a thousand lives, I refrain from bringing to disgrace a name that I have already tarnished, through my treacherous love of the brightest creature that ever bore *it*, or any other. If they who shall find this paper ever publish it, then you may further reflect that, with a good omen of your coming, I called not on the arm of justice to shield me from you: but still, thank me not, nor on this account alone indulge remorse. Oh, may the expressions of sincere sorrow and misery I now give vent to, move you to a more lively regret!—and that is cheering hope. You have never before allowed my voice to reach you; you have stopped short my words with execrations, boisterous as a raging sea; you have interrupted them by outrage on my person; you have sent back my letters unopened; you would have struck down any messenger from me. It is probable, then, that all along, you have believed me a hard-minded villain, untouched by the result of my own fearful crime. If so, let these, my last protestations, undeceive you. I *am* penitent; humbly, crawlingly penitent. Come!—you will not find me raise a hand, an eye, against *your* hand, *your* eye.

"I am certain you will be minutely informed of my usual haunts abroad, in this little place, that so you may surprise me upon a secret spot. Knowing this, it is my resolve to tempt you to a haunt of mine, the most favourable for your purpose. Every night, henceforward, till the last—my last—I will loiter in a lonely corner of the burial-ground of the cathedral, already, or soon to be, well described to you; for thither, I am assured, your spy must have watched me repair, during my accustomed evening walk; and there, among the graves, and perhaps standing upon my own, there, in the dark, I will expect you. Not a cry, not a loud word, shall expose you to detection. Come!—could I avoid you still, I would do it—no matter what words may have here escaped me; but is there the slightest hope that I can? After all that has passed, what corner of the wide earth is able to hide me from *his* glance, and *your* arm? And by walking out in the night, as is my wont, and in the places I am accustomed to—particularly when you know not that *I* know—how shall I be accessory to my own death? True, I might await you, trebly armed—but against whom? *Her* father!—unutterable horror is in the thought. Ay, come!—and let the last words I shall hear on earth be even her name! Hers—growled forth as you will!"

Thus ended the document. Of that anticipated meeting in the silent churchyard nothing but the result is known. The paper *was* published, and that it produced some of the effects hoped for by the writer is thought by the good and christian; for, some six months afterwards, a large wooded case came, directed to the mayor of the city, from Dublin, where it had been imported; and upon opening it was found a marble urn, with a pedestal, inscribed to "The Roman Merchant."

ILL GOT, ILL GONE.

“WELL—it’s my turn, now, sure enough, genteels, to tell my story ; and it will be most about how ould Square (Squire) M’Cass come by the great fort’n that he couldn’t keep with as strong a hand as he got it —‘ Ill got, ill gone,’ ye know, neighbours.” In these words one of a circle of Irish villagers, assembled round a winter fire, and beguiling the long holiday evening with their favourite amusement of story-telling, began his imposed task. The tale is preserved in his words, or as nearly so as possible.

“Every one that hears me, young and ould, knows who I mean by Square M’Cass, though he’s dead and gone from among us many a year. Let any gorsoon or little girl that doesn’t know—or, at laste, that has heard tell of him, but not of what a great man he was in his time—just step over the tressel of the door of this good friend’s house, and look up the slant of the hill, in the moonlight. There is to be seen the remains of a big barrack of a place he built for himself, more than fifty years ago, though its tall gables and chimblies are now tatthered and torn with the weather, and the bat and the scallercrow have more to say to it than Square M’Cass. And, when any

one looks at that ould ruin, an' I is tould, more-be-token, that all the lan' I you can see from the highest window-hole, at every side of it, belonged to him that built it once upon a time, then, certain sure, it will be guessed what a man he was.

"Well, genteels: 'Tisn't of Square M'Cass, alone I have to say 'Ill got, ill gone;'—the word fits them he got his money from, as well as its fits himself: but ye shall hear what ye shall hear. I had the story, in bits and scraps, from more than one knowledgeable body, and from time to time; from the poor darling mother o' me—rest her soul in glory!—from cousins and cousin's child—her of some of the people I'm to talk about; and from Jude Murphy, the mistress of the Fighting Cocks, below in the village, and own grand daughter of the widow Murphy that kept the same house before she was born. And, sure enough, it's into the kitchen of the Fighting Cocks we are to step, the first going off.

"A nate, cosy kitchen it was; kept clane and well-swept; a full barrel always in the corner, and a fire-side almost as snug as this one we are sitting at—every thing befitting man and horse that came that way, supposing them the first in the land—an' I barring that the horse had his own good lodging in the warm stable, right at hand. And so, Biddy Murphy was sitting forment her man o' the house (they were newly married at that same time) by the pleasant fire, of a winter's evening, like this, only earlier, when she hears a sound she was always glad to hear—the noise of horses' feet, stopping at her door; and, when she hurried to the trassel, two decent, well dressed, mannerly men were stepping down from their saddles. She made her curtshee to them, and called Mickie Murphy to put up their horses; and soon she had them settled in the warmest corner, a can of good ould *shibbe n* (home-brewed ale) a piece, in three hands, and the fresh eggs and the nice bacon screeching in the pan for their supper. And, certain sure she said in her own mind that she had the luck to have two responsible (respectable) pleasant bodies in her house that night; and, when Mickie came back from the stable, and made one at the fire-side, they all

chatted jocosely together, of one thing or another, though nothing particular till afther.

"Biddy Murphy's hand was on the frying-pan, to turn out the eggs and bacon on the dish, when she stopt herself, and said, 'Hushth! merry Christmas to me! but I hear another man and horse for the Fighting Cocks this blessed night!' and, sure enough, she whipt to the door, laying the pan on the hearth, and stepped back with a new-comer.

"He was a sogering-man, a throoper, discharged from the wars, as it turned out to be. afther ould Shamus ran from the Boyne, but still in his soger's clothes, and carrying his long sword at his side, that clanked at every step he made across the flure, in his jack-boots and spurs. His tongue betokened that he came from the Black North, where they don't spake either English, or Irish, or Scotch, but a kind of a mixtrum-gallorum of their own, made up of the three together, that's not like any dacent christian speech—much good may it do them. The way he had wid him tould of the place he had come from, more-be-to-ken; for he was not sprightly nor pleasant in his looks or his words to Misthress Murphy, nor any one about him, but as serious as a pig getting a sun-dial by heart, and stand-offish, and apt to find fault with other people's discourse, and quite full of himself: the greater the shame for a young man like him, that night, at Eiddy Murphy's hearth, and she doing her best to please him; for, young enough he was, not above thirty, and a tall broad-shouldered throoper into the bargain.

"When he took his stool at the fire, afther seeing his horse in the stable, the hearty gossip that had been going on there afore he came to the door, was amost put a stop to. He would not laugh at any thing that the woman o' the house or the man o' the house said to cheer up the hearts of their customers, or that the two jocoselooking men, who had come in before him, said in return; and so by degrees, every body grew as down in the mouth as himself: or, if the discourse was taken up now and then, it had no laugh in it, but turned on sarious things. Even the good supper that he had his share of, and the *cruiskeen lawn*, (full cup or pitcher,) left at his hand, couldn't make him put on a mer-

ry face, so that the people round him might find heart to be jocose again; no, nor as much as make him join in the most in-earnest talk: only from time to time he said a cross word, blaming the victuals, or the *shibeen*, or making out that his companions were discoorsing like fools, or not like christian cratures. By and by, howsomever, he found a little more of his tongue, though it was the bad tongue still.

“‘Ye are not of our parts, genteels?’ says Misthress Murphy, to her other two customers.

“‘No, ma’am,’ says one of them, making answer, ‘this is the first time we ever came into the county Louth’

“‘And ye come a good way up the country, I’ll go bail,’ says Misthress Murphy, again.

“‘All the way from Kerry, ma’am,’ the man said to her, very civil and hearty.

“‘Musha, ay! that’s a good step, of a sartainty. And, is the place round about here very sthrange to ye, after laving your own place, so mortial far in the south?’ asked Biddy over again.

“The two men looked hard at each other, before he that had spoken first said, ‘We have a quare answer to that question, ma’am; for though this is our first journey into Louth, as I tould you afore, and though the night fell on us just after crossing the bounds of the next county, only a stone’s throw from your snug house, we think we could describe every tree and bush of——’

“‘Hushth, Aby!’ says the second man, taking the word out of his gossip’s mouth.

“‘Never fear, Dick,’ Aby made answer, ‘I’m not going to make a fool of myself, or you—every tree and bush, ma’am,’ he went on, turning to the woman o’ the house, ‘and every thing in the world besides, of a certain spot, not very far from the spot we are talking on this blessed minute: it’s a truth, sir,’ he repeated, nodding to the throoper, who, at his last words, raised up his eyes from the hearth to look at Aby.

“‘Well, and that’s quare, of a sartainty, as you promised it would be, sir,’ says Biddy Murphy; ‘ye got

our knowledge of the spot ye mane, out of a book, I'm thinking ?'

"No, indeed, ma'am," says he.

"Then ye saw it dhrawn out and printed in a pictur, and the name printed undher it ?' Biddy a second time demanded of the man.

"Nor that, either upon my word and credit, ma'am," he replied to her.

"But somebody that knew it well described it to ye, stock and stone afore ye came—sure that must be it ?' says Mistriss Murphy for the last time, very curious to find out, as ye may suppose.

"No living tongue has ever made mention of it to us, ma'am !" was all that Aby answered, only he spoke in a remarkable way, very slow, and half under his breath.

"Blessed hour !" cries Biddy, opening her mouth and her eyes at her two customers. The throoper also grumbled out something, and kept staring.

"Biddy," says the man of the house, handing her the pipe, 'I'll guess it for you. The two genteels saw the place in a dhrame, whatever place it is.

"Hoot-toot," grunted the throoper, shifting himself on his stool, and turning sideways to the company, eyes and all, mighty wise and scornful.

"The Lord save us !" cries Biddy agin, while the two Korry men only looked more and more serious.

"You may hoot us, sir," the husband went on to the throoper ; 'but I'll lay you a small wager I am in the right—and, more than that, I'll lay the same wager that the dhrame was about money being hid in the place, and that the two genteel have dhramt it together, over and over, and that they are come into Louth, to-night to see their dhrame out.'

"All nonsense, and turf and butter-milk," the throoper made answer, in words like my words, though may be not the very same, for I don't pretend to spake his north bad English—"and all come of the errors and superstitions of ould papistry." And he gave himself another swing round, and spoke down in his throat, and turned up his nose, like my lady's lap-dog at could pee-aties. And, upon that, every sowl that heard him snapped at him, be-

cause they were all good Christians like ourselves, or had the name of it, at last; and Biddy Murphy's husband dared him to make the wager; and her two customers promised to decide it, by making oath of the truth one way or another; and she called him names, and told him he ought to be ashamed of himself; and at last he consented, and wagered his sould again two gould guineas that the Kerry men could not and would not uphold what Mike Murphy had said. So, the sould and the money were put on the table together, and he swore the men on a little Bible he took out of his pocket; and, sure enough, the sould was lost, for they made oath that every word Mike had spoken was gospel.

" 'Now what's the rason you don't take it up, man o' the house says the throoper, speaking to Mike, who didn't make the laste motion for the sould, but only looked at it as a body would look at a live thing that might turn on a body, and bite. He thought he had a rason for keeping his hands to themselves—or, may be, two rasons. Biddy used to say that first and foremost, he didn't half like to meddle with it, and its gruff-looking owner to the fore, even supposing he had won it quite fair: but she used to say, besides, that he couth the Kerry men winking and smiling at one another, in a knowing way, just when they were going to kiss the little Bible; and, upon that, Mike wasn't sure of them, out and out; and, moreover, he thought the throoper saw them doing the same thing, and had a maning in his words and look when he said—'What's the rason you don't take it up, man o' the house?'

" 'Never lay a finger on it, Mike!' cried Biddy, as soon as the speech was out of his mouth—'Huth, sir,' facing herself about to the throoper, 'put your purty-sould at your own side, where it ought to be—it's little use I or my good man has of such things; and sure it was all out of fun we laid the wager with you, and no more did we want than just to show you that Mистер Murphy can make a sharp guess at a riddle now and then.' And Mike himself bid the throoper take it, saying the same words that Biddy said; and so he sthretched out his big long arm for it at last, with a grave kind of a smile on his own face, for the first time—that evening.

"Very well. Ye must not think, genteels, that Mike Murphy had any doubt of the guess he made—no such thing; he believed firmly, and so did Biddy, that the Kerry men, Aby and Dick, as they called each other, had dhramt the dhrame, and came into Louth to dig for the money; and when I said that he did not depend on them, out and out, for winning the wager, it was to give ye to understand that he feared they did not kiss the book right—only their thumbs, may be—that was all. Very well again. Mighty unasy he was to try if they would tell him whereabouts in the neighbourhood they expected to find the treasure; and so, giving a sign to Biddy—and Biddy wanted little asking—he got her to thry Aby on that head; but Aby was not entirely the fool she took him for; and all she had for her trouble was—'Ah, ma'am! and sure that would be telling!'

"It was growing late, and the two men got up from the fire, as if going to shake themselves, and make ready for bed. The saddles of their horses lay in a corner where they had put them down; they took them on their arms, and stood awhile together, whispering. The throoper was nearer to them at that time than the master or the mistress of the Fighting Cocks; and it's said he heard a word or two, for all his not seeming to take notice. In a minute or so, Aby said to the other, spaking loud, 'Come up the loft with me, Dick, till we take care of the saddles, and then we'll settle who is to go out, and have a peep first.'

"'It's talking of looking at the place, out of doors, they are,' says Biddy to Mike: and then she tould them not to be unasy about the saddles, for that they would be quite safe in the kitchen—as safe as if they put them undher their heads, for pillows, in the loft where they were to sleep. But they made answer, that the saddles did not belong to them: that they had borrowed them of a friend or two in Kerry; that they were new, and of value; and that they did not like, for the same rasons, to trust them out of their sight.

"'Of great value they must be surely,' says the throoper, getting up, too, from his stool—'of great value to make you so careful of them; I ought to know a good

saddle from a bad one ; let me handle one of them ;'—with that he whipt Dick's saddle off his arm before any one could hinder him : 'And, sure enough,' says the throoper, says, he, 'this is a serviceable sort of a saddle ; but what makes it so heavy, I wondher !'

" 'Hath, that's the virtue of it,' answered Dick, snapping it back again ; and then he and Aby went up the laddher to the loft, and staid there a long while, whispering over again.

"No one had come down, when the throoper said he would walk out a bit to stretch his long legs, after his hard day's rile, before he went to bed. 'He's slipping out to lie in wait for them, Mike,' says Biddy to the husband—'let you step out, too, and who knows but you might have a share of what's going ;' and many a time she bid him thry his fortune ; but Mike Murphy was a quiet man, and staid where he was.

"While they were talking under their breath, Dick ran bouldly down the laddher, and, looking pleasantly at them, and spaking as if he wanted to make no great secret of anything, except the real spot where the money was, said, 'Now for it !' and darted out of the house. The man and wife sat at the fire, going on with their goshier. Aby soon made one among them agin. In a short half-hour's time, Dick came in, rubbing his hands, and dancing about, now on one leg, now on another. 'You have found the place?' asked Aby.

"The very place, sure enough,' says Dick. 'And honest people, we'd tell you. I lend us a spade, a crow, and a pick-axe, or borrow them for us from the neighbours, and wait here till we go try our luck—' twould be unmannerly for any one to follow us—and, according to what we may find, ye will be the better of your civility.' And no sooner said than done : Mike and Biddy got the things they asked for in a jiffy, and out they went together, stripping off their coats and waistcoats to be ready for their work.

"For the hundredth time, ay, and more, Biddy wanted Mike to stale easy after them ; but she couldn't get him to stir. 'Well, then, salvation to me, but I'll have an eye after them mysel,' says she ; and, patting on her cloak*

she was as good as her word, sure enough, crossing the trassel, and leaving Mike alone at the fire.

"The place above all others, nigh at hand, that a body would dhrame of finding money in, was an ould castle, built by the thieves of Danes the time they had all Ireland to themselves, before Brian Boru the Great, dhruve them all into the sey at Clontarf, like a flock of half-starved wolves, And Biddy Murphy was not the woman to forget that same, the moment she left her house, but sthraight away, she bent her steps to the ould four walls. Round about the narrow window-holes, and the low doorway, she went peeping like a cat; and it was asy for her to see the Kerry men inside on the ground floor. But they were not digging and did not seem as if they were much in earnest about going to dig—not at all; but there they sat, side by side, on the big, loose stones that had tumbled in from the top of the castle, and the moon shining strong on them through the dourway: and Biddy thought they were only listening as if to hear some footstep they expected might come, laughing low to one another, and looking very 'cute and knowledgeable all the time.

"And at last she heard one of them say to the other, with a big curse—asking your pardon, genteels—'The hussey! won't she stale over here to watch us, afther all! If she doesn't, half our good plan fails.'"

"She will, man alive," the other made answer—"she's the woman to do it, I tell you; the husband is a gom (ass)—but Biddy has the right curosimy in her."

"Thank ye kindly, gossips," says Biddy to herself, and faix 'tishn't a bad guess ye have, no more than Mike Murphy: and so here goes to give ye a notion that I *am* here, but not that I know that *ye* know anything about it.' For Biddy had it in her mind, in a minute, that they wanted her to see them rise the treasure, and be a witness for them that it was honestly dhramt of and come by. And with that she stirred her feet among the weeds and rubbish, outside o' the ould place where she stood, so that they might hear her a little, which they did, at the same time, and then with signs to each other, the two rogues of the world began to clear away the big stones, and to dig at last.

"They were but a short time at work, when Aby cried out, as his spade sounded like music against something, 'Here it is, by the piper!' and down they threw their spades, and began to clear round the treasure with their pickaxes, and, one by one, they drew out of the earth a great many little tin cannisters, like. 'Goold in them all! goold in every one o' them! and the whole lot full to the brim!' they said, dancing like wild men, the same that Dick had done in the Fighting Cocks, according as they examined the little cannisters one afther another—'Goold enough to make rich men and gentlemen of us, for ever and a day!' They went on, 'Goold enough to buy a nate bite of land out of ould Ireland's ground!'"

"'Yes,' said some one else that Biddy did not see at first—'Yes, but not for ye!'—and behold ye, genteels, with that the big throoper came jumping down upon them, from a hiding-hole in the ould wall of the room, or whatever we are to call it, and his sword in his hand, and his cross face, now looking terrible entirely. Down he jumped, and rattled, jack boots, spurs and all, among the loose stones; and the first thing he made bould to do was to split poor Aby's skull to the clin, before any one could say—'Don't, sir and I'll be obliged-to you.'

"Biddy was going to screech murder, as loud as she could, when something flew, whist'ing,—for all the world as if one of the good people (fairies) did it—by her ear and stópt her breath; and to tell the truth, she was more and more frightened at the noise of a gun or a pistol going off, entirely at the same time: for it came into her mind that it was the bullet she heard so close by her ear, and that she had what might be called a great escape, for the same reason; and the second Kerry man fired the shot, sure enough, at the throoper, thinking to have revenge for his gossip's death, only he missed his mark, somehow;—and he dhrew another pistol from his bosom, and presented it, when the throoper knocked it out of his hand, and then they closed and had a brave wrastling match.

"Biddy now found her voice, and pillalooed, and clapt her hands, and danced on her heel, at the narrow window.

hole, enough to bring down the remains of the ould castle on all their heads, though she had not the thought, nor maybe the strength, to do a better thing by far, that is, run home to Mike Murphy.

“‘Hould your tongue, woman!’ cries the throoper to her, roaring all the time that he was shaking the Kerry-man, like a dog worrying a rat—‘hould your foolish bastely tongue, and come in here to us!—I am glad you came in time to bear witness.’

“‘Musha, and I’m in great request with you one after another, for bearing witness,’ says Bidly; ‘and what good can I do *you*, mither throoper, by giving a true account of what I have seen?’

“‘Come in, and you shall learn,’ he grumbled, and in speaking these words he got the Kerry-man on his back, and was strapping his arms behind him.

“‘Come in?’ asked Bidly—‘come in to you, to be murdered, as you are afther doing to one of my honest civil customers, and are going to do wil the other?’

“‘Fool of a woman!’ roars the throoper, madder than ever—‘you do not know what you say;—but I care little, so you listen to me, and heed me. The man I have cut down with my sword was a great highway robber, and so is the man who lies bound at my feet. For many years they have persued their bad calling in the south; nor are their hands clane of the blood of some of the people they plundered. They had gained a power of riches by their evil deeds, and thought to leave Ireland with it, and live like grandees in a foreign counthry. But the government, and the great gentlemen of the south, hearing of their plan, sent descriptions of them, printed, all over Ireland, and to every port where they could take shipping, in particular; so that after many attempts, they gave up their notion of going abroad, and laid another plan to enjoy their riches at home. And it was this last plan that sent them into Louth, a good distance from every place where they were well-known, and set them upon inventing their story of the dhrame, at your fire-side’

“‘Blessed hour, sir!’ says Bidly, speaking in through

the split in the ould wall—‘but how did you come to know all this? and did not they find the threasure nigh to the spot you are standing on, at any rate?’

“‘He that hides can find,’ the throoper made answer. ‘Before they left your home together, for this place, one of them came here alone, and put the goold into the ground, and haped stones over it. I saw him at the work. Ay, and I suspected his intent before he quitted your roof.’

“‘You did, sir, did you?’ asked Biddy again,

“‘I did; and from the moment that I took his saddle in my hand, too, for it was almost as heavy as so much lead, by rason of the goold that was hid in it. Ask me any other question you like,’ he went on spaking in a very slow, determined voice—‘any other questions; but be quick, my business must be finished.’

“‘Why, then, it’s only what I asked you before, sir,’ says Biddy.

“‘That is,’ says he, takin the word from her, ‘how have I come to know all the rest I have told you: you shall learn. Afther the man, who now lies dead, had concealed the goold, he went back for his comrade, and I remained where I was till they came side by side, carrying their spades, and other things. Here they sat down to wait for you; and from their discoorse together, I larned who and what they were: and the hopes they had that, upheld by your evidence, the fable of their having found the money, by virtue of a dhrame, might pass current in your supperdishous neighbourhood. I also recollected a description of them, which I had often read in the printed hue and cry raised afther them, and not a doubt was left on my mind. Then my part was soon taken. You have seen me go half through with it. Having to face two bold men, both well armed, of coorse, I knew that it behoved me to rid myself of one of them at the first blow.’

“‘And so you did, sir, to a sartainty—but who does the threasure come to?’ says Biddy.

“‘To me!—fool, I call you agin, for asking!’—cries the throoper. ‘Do you think a single man will dare what I have dared for nothing? Larn that the procla-

mation made for taking these men gives all the money found in their hands to the person who does its bidding on them, dead or alive, ay, and a good reward besides. And so you may tell whom you like, that you have seen me gether up my own;' and saying these words, he stooped down, sure enough and put the little cannisters into his pockets, one afther another, as many as twenty of them, 'You are looking at me, too,' he says again, turning his eyes on the sham Kerry-man, who, to tell the truth was watching him mighty close;—'but 'Ill got ill gone,' you know, comarade. And come, now, stand on your legs, and walk with me down to the village, till we can see about sending you to be well looked afther; Help me, woman, to lift him.'

"Biddy, none afeard, did as he bid her; her mind not at all asy on the head of which of them was the real robber, and which not. But the throoper's story turned out to be true enough. The man he had bound was sent to jail, put on his thrial, and hanged, upon the oaths of many who knew him well, and there was no law to take a single gould piece from the throoper; but, as he tould Biddy it would happen, he got more and more riches and the greatest of praise, and who but he from that day out. And, now, genteels, ye'll be guessing the throoper's name, afore I tell it to ye; and sure enough it was M'Cass; the very M'Cass that bought all the land in these parts, and was the great Square M'Cass among us. And 'Ill got, ill gone,' was his word to the bould high-wayman; but men and women are now living that can say the same word of himself; for, afther the first spurt of his good luck, nothing went right with him; he soon became a struggling man, canting (selling) and dhriuing, early and late, to make both ends meet for the keeping up of his big house, and his hounds, and his horses, and his ladies. Ay, and a sorrowful man he was, too; without wife or child, kith or kin, true friend or kind neighbour; and so he spent his life, and so he died; in poverty he was put into the ground, without any christian show of a funeral, without a tongue to *keen*th (wail) him, or a hand to fix a stone at his head; and people have it,

that the night he departed, Square M'Cass talked as if the man he cut down in the ould castle was sitting by his bed-side ; and that the last saying heard from his lips was his own saying of ould—'Ill got, Ill gone—Ill got, ill gone'—repeated over and over, till he was stiff."

THE CHURCH-YARD WATCH.

THE dead are watched lest the living should prey on them!—'Tis a strange alliance—of the living with DEATH—that His kingdom and sovereignty may remain untrenched upon. In different parts of England, we have seen watch-houses, almost entirely composed of glass, built in lonesome church-yards, of which generally the parish sexton, and perhaps his dog (ill-fated among men and dogs!) are the appointed nightly tenants; with liberty, ceded or taken, to leave their dull lamp in the watch-box, and roam, here and there, at their pleasure, among the graves, until day light. What stern necessities man forces upon man! There can scarce be a more comfortless lot, or, making allowance for the almost in-born shudderings of the human heart, a more appalling one, than that of the poor grave scooper or bell-puller who is thus doomed to spend his night, summer and winter. Habit, indeed, may eventually blunt the first keenness of his aversion, if not terror: he may serve a due apprenticeship to horrors, and learn his trade. After a thousand secret and unowned struggles to seem brave and indifferent, he may at last grow callously courageous. His flesh may cease to creep as he strides on, in

his accustomed round, over the abodes of the silent and mouldering, and hears his own dull footstep echoed through the frequent dreary hollowness beneath. But what has he gained, now, beyond the facility of earning his wretched crust for himself and his crying infants!—We have seen and spoken with such an unhappy being, who seemed to have lost, in the struggle which conquered nature's especial antipathy, (nature in a breast and mind like his, at least,) most of the other sympathies of his kind. He had a heavy, ox-like expression of face; he would scarce speak to his neighbours (although *we* contrived to make him eloquent) when they passed him at his door, or in the village street; his own children feared or disliked him, and did not smile nor whisper in his presence. We have watched him into the church-yard, at his usual hour, after night-fall; and as he began to stalk about there, the ghastly sentinel of the dead, he appeared to be in closer fellowship with them, than with the fair existence which he scarce more than nominally shared. It was said, indeed, that, upon his initiation, at a tender age and under peculiar circumstances, into his profession of church-yard watchman, temporary delirium prepared him for its regular and steady pursuit ever since; and that although he showed no symptoms of distinct insanity, when we knew him, the early visitation had left a gleam on his mind, and a thick, nerveless insensibility in his heart, which then, at forty-five, formed his character. In fact, we learned a good deal about him, for every one talked of him—and, as has been hinted, much of that good deal from himself, to say nothing of his wife in his absence; and if he did not deliberately invent fables of his past trials, for the purpose of gratifying a little spirit of mockery of our undisguised interest, as mad as the maddest bedlamite he must have been upon the occasion alluded to: nay, to recount, with a grave face (as he did) the particulars of the delusions of his time of delirium, did not argue him a very sound-minded man at the moment he gave us his confidence. We are about to tell his story, at length, in our own way, however; that is, we shall try to model into our own language (particularly the raving parts) what his neigh-

bours, his spouse, and his own slow-moving and heavy lips have, from time to time, supplied us with.

He was the only child of an affectionate and gentlemanly father, who died when he was little more than a boy, leaving him sickly and pining. His mother wept a month, mourned three months more,—and was no longer a widow. Her second husband proved a surly fellow, who married her little fortune, rather than herself, as the means of keeping his quart pot filled, almost from morning to night, at the village Tap, where he played good-fellow and politician to the expressed admiration of all his companions. He had long been the parish sexton, and took up his post night after night, in the church-yard. Little fear had he of what he might see there; or, he had out-grown his fears, or, if he thought or felt of the matter, the lonely debauch which he was known to make in that strange banquet-place, served to drug him into obliviousness. He deemed his duty—or he said and swore he did—only a tiresome and slavish one, and hated it just as he hated daily labour. And as he declared and harangued at the Tap—he had long ago foresworn it, only that it paid him well; but, now that his marriage made his circumstances easier, he was determined to drink alone in the church yard no longer: and he fed an idle useless lad at home, who with his dog as idle as he—roamed and loitered about here and there, and had never yet done a single thing to earn their bread. But it was full time that both were taught the blessings of industry; and he would teach them;—and—now that he thought of it—why should not Will take his place in the watchbox, and so keep the shillings in the family? His friends praised his views, one and all, and he grew thrice resolved.

Returned the next morning from his nocturnal charge, he reeled to bed in solemn, drunken determination. He arose, towards evening, only half reclaimed by sleep to ordinary sense, and set about his work of reformation. He ate his meal in silence, turned from the table to the fire without a word, looked at the blaze, grimly contemplative, then grumbling suddenly at his wife—“And where is that truant now?” he asked “down by the marshes

with his cur, I suppose; or gone a-nutting, or lying stretched in the sun, the two idlers together; what!—and must I work and work, and strive and strive—I, I, for ever—and will he never lend me a hand?—go where he likes, do what he likes, and laugh and fatten on my labour?”

“Master Hunks,” said the wife, “Will is sickly, and won’t fatten on either your labour or mine—not to talk of his own;—you know ’tis a puny lad, and wants some favour yet a-while; with God’s help, and ours, he may be stronger soon.”

Will and his dog here came in. From what followed, this evening it will be seen, that the ill-fated lad promised, in early youth, to be of an open, kindly, intelligent character, very different indeed from that in which we found him husked up, at five-and-forty.

He saluted his step-father, and sat down quietly near the fire. His poor dumb companion—friend of his boyhood and his father’s gift—coiled himself up before the blaze, and prepared to surrender his senses to happy sleep, interspersed with dreams of all the sports he had enjoyed with his master that day. Hunks, his eye glancing from one object of dislike to the other, kicked the harmless brute, who jumped up, yelping in pain and bitter lamentation, and ran for shelter under Will’s chair. Will’s pale cheek broke out into colour, his weak eye sparkled, his feeble voice arose shrilly, and he asked—“Why is my poor dog beaten?”

“The lazy cur!” said Hunks—“he was in my way, and only got paid for idleness.”

“’Twas ill done,” resumed Will—“he was my father’s dog, and my father gave him to me; and if my father were alive and well, he would not hurt him, nor see him hurt!”—Tears interrupted his sudden fit of spirit.

“Cur, as much as he is!” retorted Hunks—“do you put upon me, here at my own fire-side? *You* are the idler—you—and he only learns of you—and I hadn’t ought to have served him out, and you so near me.”

“It has been God’s will,” said the boy, “to keep my strength from me.”

“Be silent and hear me!” roared Hunks—“this is your

life, I say—playing truant for ever—and what is mine, and your own good mother's here!"

"Master Hunks," pleaded the wife—"God knows I don't grudge nothing I can do for my poor Will's sake."

"And you—not a word from you either, Missis!" grunted Hunks—"I am put upon by one and t'other of you—ye sleep in comfort every night, and leave me to go a watching, out o' doors, there, in all weathers; but stop a bit, my man, it shan't be this way much longer; I'll have my natural rest in my bed, some time or other, and soon; and you must earn it for me."

"How, father! how can I earn it?" asked Will—"I would if I could—but how! I haven't learn't no trade, and you know as well as any one knows it, I am not able to work in the fields or on the roads, or get my living any one way."

"Then you can sit still and watch—that's light work," muttered Hunks.

"Watch!" cried mother and son together—"watch what? and where? or whom?"

"The dead folk in the church-yard."

"Heaven defend me from it!" cried poor Will clasping his hands and falling back in his chair.

"Ay, and this very night," continued the despot—"this very night you shall mount guard in my place, and I shall have my lawful sleep, what the whole parish cries shame on me for not having months ago."

"Master Hunks, 'twill kill the boy!" cried the mother.

"Missis—don't you go for to cross me so often!" remonstrated her husband, with a fixed look, which, short as they had been one flesh, she had reason to understand and shrink at.—"Come, my man, stir yourself; 'tis time you were at the gate; the church clock has struck; *they will expect us*"—he interrupted himself in a great rage, and with a great oath—"but here I keep talking and the cur never minds a word I say!—Come along!"

"Don't lay hands on him!" screamed the mother as he strode towards the boy—"what I have often told you has come to pass, Master Hunks—you have killed him!"

Hunks scoffed at the notion, although, indeed, Will's

hands had fallen helplessly at his side, and his chin rested on his breast, while his eyes were closed, and his lips apart. But he had only become insensible from sheer terror acting on a weak frame. Sighs and groans soon gave notice of returning animation. His mother then earnestly besought their tyrant to go on his night's duty, and, at least till the following night, leave her son to her care. Half in fear of having to answer for a murder, incredulously as he pretended to speak, Hunks turned out of the house, growling and threatening.

"Is he gone?" asked Will, when he regained his senses—"gone not to come back?"—and having heard his mother's gentle assurances, he let his head fall on her shoulder, weeping, while he continued:—

"Mother, mother, it would destroy the little life I have! I could not bear it for an hour! The dread I am in of it was born with me! When I was a child of four years, I had dreams of it, and I remember them to this day; they used to come in such crowds round my cradle! As I grew up, you saw and you know my weakness. I could never sit still in the dark, nor even in the daylight out of doors in lonesome places. Now in my youth—a lad—almost a man—I am ashamed to speak of my inward troubles. Mother you do not know me—I do not know myself! I walk out sometimes down by the river, and, listening to the noise of the water over the rocks, where it is shallow, and to the rustling of the trees as they nod in the twilight, voices and shrieks come round me—sometimes they break in my ears—and I have turned to see what thing it was that spoke, and thought some grey tree at my side had only just changed and become motionless, and seemed as if, a moment before, it had been something else, and had a tongue, and said the words that frightened me!—Oh, it was but yester evening I ran home from the banks of the river, and felt no heart within me till I had come in here to the fireside, and seen you moving near me!

"You know the lone house all in ruins upon the hill—I fear it mother more than my tongue can tell you! I have been taken through it, in my dreams, in terrible company, and here I could describe to you its bleak apartments, one

by one—its vaults, pitch dark, and half filled with stones and rubbish, and choked up with weeds—its winding, creeping staircases, and its flapping windows—I know them all, though my feet never yet crossed its threshold!—Never, mother—though I have gone near it, to enter it, and see if what I had dreamt of it was true—and I went in the first light of the morning; but when close by the old door-way, the rustle of the shrubs and weeds startled me, and I thought—but sure that was fancy—that some one called me in by name—and then I turned and raced down the hill, never looking back till I came to the meadow ground where cows and sheep are always grazing, and heard the dogs barking in the town, and voices of the children at play!”

“Will, my king,” said his mother, soothingly, “this is all mere childishness at your years. God is above us and around us; and even if evil and strange things are allowed to be on earth, he will shield us from all harm. Arouse up like a man! for, indeed, your time of boyhood is passing—nay it has passed with other lads not much older; only you have been poorly and weakly from your cradle, Will. Come, go to sleep; and before you lie down, pray for better health and strength to-morrow.”

“To-morrow!” he repeated—“and did my step-father say any thing of to-morrow?”

His mother answered him evasively, and he resumed, —“Oh, how I fear to-morrow!—oh, mother, you have loved me, and you do love me—for my weakness, my ill-health and my dutifulness—and you loved my father—oh, for his sake as well as mine, mother, keep me from what I am threatened with!—keep me from it, if you would keep me alive another day?”

He went into his little sleeping-apartment, stricken to the very soul with supernatural fears.

After spending a miserable night, he stole out of the house next morning, and wandered about the private walks adjacent to the town, until he thought his step-father might have arisen and taken his usual walk to the Tap. But as the lad was about to re-enter the house, Hunks met him at the threshold. Will shrunk back; to his surprise and comfort, however, his fears now seemed ill-

founded. The man bid him good-morrow in as cheerful and kind a tone as he could command, shook his hand, tapped him on the head and left the house. Delighted, though still agitated, Will sought his mother within doors told her his good omens, and spent a happy day. At dinner, too, notwithstanding Hunks' presence, the mother and son enjoyed themselves, so amiable had the despot become, at least in appearance.

When their meal was over, Hunks, as if to attain the utmost civility, invited Will to go out with him for a walk by the river—"and let's have Barker (Will's dog) for company," continued Hunks; "he may show us sport with a rat, or such like, Will."

Accordingly, the three strolled out together, Will leading the way by many a well-known sedge or tuft of bushes, or undermined bank, the resorts of the water-rat, and sometimes of the outlaw otter; and Barker upheld his character, by starting, hunting down, and killing one of the first-mentioned animals. As twilight came on, they turned their faces towards the little town. They entered it. Its little hum of life was now hushed; its streets silent, and almost deserted; its doors and windows barred and bolted, and the sounds of the rushing river and the thumping mill were the only ones which filled the air. The clock pealed ten as they continued their way. Hunks had grown suddenly silent and reserved. They passed the old Gothic church, and now were passing the gate which led into its burial-ground. Hunks stopped short. His grey, bad eye fell on the lad—"Will," he said, "I be thinking we've walked enough for this time."

"Enough, indeed,—and thank you for your company—and good night, father," answered Will, trying to smile, though he began to tremble.

"Good night then, my man—and here be your watch-light"—and Hunks drew a dark lantern from his huge pocket.

"Nay, I want no light home," said Will; "I know the way so well; and 'tis not very dark; and you know you can't do without it on your post."

"My post!" Hunks laughed villanously—"your post you mean, Will; take it; I be thinking I shall sleep sound

to-night without a dead-light—as if I were a corpse to need it. Come along.”

“You cannot have the heart to ask me!” cried Will, stepping back.

“Pho, my man”—Hunks clutched him by the shoulder with one hand, with the other unlocked the gate and flung it open—“In with you; you’ll like it so in a few nights, you’ll wish no better post; the dead chaps be civil enough; only treat them well, and let them walk awhile, and they make very good company.” He dragged Will closer to the gate.

“Have mercy!” shrieked the wretched lad, trying to kneel, “or kill me first, father, to make me company for them, if that will please you.”

“Get in!” roared the savage—“get in!—ay, hollo out, and twist about, so, and I’ll pitch your shivering carcass half way across the church-yard!”—he forced him in from the gate—stop a bit, now—there be your lantern”—he set it down on a tomb-stone—“so, good night—yonder’s your box—just another word don’t you be caught strolling too near the murderer’s corner, over there, or you may trip and fall among the things that turn and twine on the ground, like roots of trees, to guard him.”

With a new and piercing shriek, Will clung close to his fell tormentor. Hunks, partially carrying into effect a threat he had uttered, tore the lad’s hands away, tossed him to some distance, strode out at the gate, locked it, and Will was alone with horror.

At first an anguish of fear kept him stupified and stationary. He had fallen on a freshly-piled grave, to which mechanically his fingers clung and his face joined, in avoidance of the scene around. But he soon recollected what clay it was he clung to, and at the thought, he started up, and, hushed, as the sleepers around him, made some observations. High walls quite surrounded the churchyard, as if to part him from the habitable world. His lamp was burning upon the tombstone where Hunks had placed it—one dim red spot amid the thick darkness. The church clock now tolled eleven. It ceased; his ears ached in the resumed silence, and he listened and stared

about him for what he feared. Whispers seemed to arise near him; he ran for his lamp, snatched it up, and instinctively hurried to the watch-box. Oh, he wished it made of solid rock!—it was chiefly framed of glass, useless as the common air to his terrors! He shut his eyes, and pressed his palms upon them—vain subterfuge! The fevered spirit within him brought before his mind's vision worse things than the church-yard could yawn up, were all that superstition has fancied of it true. He looked out from his watch-box in refuge from himself.

That evening a half-moon had risen early, and, at this moment, was sinking in gathering clouds behind distant hills. As he vaguely noticed the circumstance, he felt more and more desolate. Simultaneously with the disappearance of the planet, the near clock began again to strike—he knew what hour! Each stroke smote his ear as if it would crack the nerve; at the last sound, he shrieked out delirious! He had a pause from agony, then a struggle for departing reason, and then he was at rest.

At day-break his step-father found him asleep. He led him home. Will sat down to breakfast, smiling, but did not speak a word. Often, during the day, his now brilliant eye turned to the west; but why, his mother could not tell; until, as the evening made up her couch of clouds there, drawing around her the twilight for drapery; he left the house with an unusually vigorous step, and stood at the gate of the churchyard. Again he took up his post. Again the hour of twelve pealed from the old church, but now he did not fear it. When it had fully sounded, he clapped his hands, laughed and shouted.

The imaginary whispers he had heard the previous night—small, cautious whispers—came round him again; first, from a distance, then, nearer and nearer. At last he shaped them into words—"Let us walk," they said—"though he watches us, he fears us." *He!*—'twas strange to hear the dim dead speak to a living man, of himself! the maniac laughed again at the fancy, and replied to them:—

"Ay, come! appear! I give leave for it. Ye are about in crowds, I know, not yet daring to take up your

old bodies till I please; but up with them!—Graves, split on, and yield me my subjects? for am I not king of the church-yard? Obey me! ay, now your mouths gape—and what a yawning!—are ye musical, too?—a jubilee of groans! out with it, in the name of Death!—blast it about like giants carousing!

“Well blown!—and now a thousand heads popped up at once—their eyes fixed on mine, as if to ask my farther leave for a resurrection; and they know I am good-humoured now, and grow upward, accordingly, like a grove of bare trees that have no sap in them. And now they move; passing along in rows, like trees, too, that glide by one on a bank, while one sails merrily down the river—and all is stark staring sill; and others stand bolt upright against their own headstones to contemplate. I wonder what they think of! Move! move! young, old, boys, men, pale girls, and palsied grandmothers—my church-yard can never hold ’em! And yet how they pass each other from corner to corner! I think they make way through one another’s bodies, as they do in the grave. They’ll dance anon. Minuets, at least. Why they begin already!—and what partners!—a tall, gentcel young officer takes out our village witch-of-the-wield—she that died at Christmas—and our last rector smirks to a girl of fifteen—ha, ha! yon tattered little fellow is a radical, making a leg to the old duchess!—music! music!—Go, some of you that look on there, and toll the dead bell! Well done! they tie the murderer to the bell-rope by the neck, (although he was hanged before,) and the bell swings out merrily! but what face is here?”

It was the vision of a child’s face, which he believed he caught staring at him through the glass of his watch-box—the face of an only brother who had died young. The wretch’s laughter changed into tears and low wailings. By the time that his mother came to seek him, just at day-break, he was, however, again laughing; but in such a state as to frighten mirth from her heart and lips till the day she died. As has been said, symptoms of positive insanity did not long continue to appear in his

words or actions; yet, when he recovered, there was still a change in him—a dark and disagreeable change, under the inveterate confirmation of which, the curious student of human nature may, at this moment, observe him in his native village.

THE LAST OF THE STORM.

At a very early hour of a July morning, an admirer of the picturesque stood alone upon the top of a hill, on a spot best calculated to give him a bird's-eye view of the town in which he was a temporary resident, together with its adjacent scenery. The prospect he commanded was indeed most pleasing, notwithstanding that some blotches occasionally offended the eye, and produced disagreeable associations in the mind.

The extensive "haunt of men," containing twenty thousand souls, peeped out, here and there about, a mile distant, through groves, gardens, and orchards, mixed up with its out-skirts, and through more rural foliage between him and them. The river that ran under its bridges from a remote hill-source, widened as it approached the stranger; uplands sloped from behind it, and all around to a great distance the country was spotted with villas and mansions, and relieved with masses of trees, rich and abundant for an Irish landscape, though somewhat meagre if compared with a parallel scene in perfected Eng-

land. Beyond them, from twenty to forty miles off, towered blue mountains—shapeless, excepting in the general outline; blank, pale; the mere spectres of what, in reality, they were. Upon their peaks alone the rising sun had begun to shine, whilst all the rest of the picture remained untouched by his beams, though visible in their promise;—not vague in twilight, but distinct and fresh, however cool, and, as it were, unjoyous in the reflection rather than in the presence of godlike day. A white mist curled up at different points of the wide-spread slopes, the river running gray and dim, and showing only black wrinkles where at noon-tide it was to sport its dimples, and interweave its maze of little lines of light.

The dark spots of this fair view remain now to be noticed. Part of the suburbs of the town consisted of dingy ruins; cabins, and small farm-houses beyond them, also appeared half-burned;—no cattle grazed or sauntered, or reclined in their trampled pasturages—few, indeed, could be seen over the whole landscape; in other fields, hay had rotted, and wheat and barley were going to decay for want of the sickle; many mills upon the brink of the river, or of its tributary streamlets, showed signs of recent and present idleness; and before one of them, which the stranger knew had lately been converted into a temporary barrack, a sentinel was pacing. These and other things indicated that civil war, not yet quite subdued, had recently visited, in its bitter wrath, one of the fairest districts of his country: in fact, it was the end of July, 1798.

“But the storm is about to pass away,” said he, “never again, I hope, to gather on our hills and desolate our plains;—a few weeks more, and in this town and county, at least, we shall be amenable to our own civil magistrates, and not to the arbitrary administrators of martial law;—a few days more, and our sisters, wives, and daughters, need not tremble through the livelong night, cowering together like wood-pigeons from the hawk;—a few days more, and you, dearest Bessie, now dreaming of me (you will say so at breakfast) in yonder garrisoned town, may be permitted to accept of my protection.”

Indulging the last feeling, he employed himself, lover-

like, in trying to make out, among the different groups of houses that broke through the foliage in and beyond the town, the identical roof under which he imagined his fair dreamer to slumber, when he heard shrill cries from a bye-road that skirted the hill upon which he stood, although its convex sweep was so abrupt as to hide that road from his view. Suddenly the cries were hushed—and then came a clashing of weapons, from the same quarter. Indifferent to the danger of interfering, in such times, in an unknown quarrel, he hastened to the road, not indeed by plunging directly downward from the spot on which he had been standing, which was impracticable, but rather by running along the hill's ridge towards the town until he gained a path which, winding obliquely over its bosom, would tardily usher him upon the road, at a point considerably above the spot he was so anxious to gain.

Before he got half way down, the clashing ceased, as the cries had previously done. He stopped to listen in the *bosheen*;—horsemen approached him, yet hidden by a turn of the road. Prudence now qualified his first chivalrous ardour, and he secreted himself behind a fence. Presently, two Hessians, belonging to a regiment quartered in the town, came slowly up to his hiding place. They were conversing in their own language, with which he was acquainted, and their first words strongly interested him. They came close—he held his breath to catch every syllable they uttered, and just as they passed, he ventured, for a reason drawn from their discourse, to glance observantly though cautiously at them. He became satisfied, so far;—the face of one bled profusely; the right arm of the other was bound up, and hung disabled at his side. Soon after clearing his ambush, the Hessians trotted briskly towards the town. He then jumped over the fence, and, greatly excited, ran along the road in the direction they had come. He arrived at a stile, leading into a pasture-field, which belonged, as he was aware, to a farm-house, distant some fields more from it, and skirting a little retired hamlet—almost the only one in the immediate district still free from the visi-

tations of civil war. The mark of horses' hoofs on the dust near the fence, recently impressed, "made him pause at this spot. He vaulted over the stile, and remarked, even during his quick transit, that it was bloody. At the end of a path running from it, he saw two cows standing together, holding down their heads; a pail, overturned, was near them; and beyond them were some men and women, with eyes bent upon the ground. A few bounds brought him into the midst of the group, and he now saw what he had expected—the poor owner of the pail lying senseless, if not dead, on the grass; her head bruised, and a severe wound in her neck.

He called on the bystanders for an explanation—one and all, they professed complete ignorance of the accident. They had only heard screams at some distance; and when, after waiting for each other to advance in a body, they arrived on the spot, they saw no one—nothing, in short, but the poor girl lying there, her pail upset, her milk spilled, and the two cows standing over her; and "*she* could not yet spake for herself, if it was the Lord's will that she was ever to spake agin at all;" but one of the women surmised that "Brown Beck, the young cow wi' the sharp horns, that now and then was a giddy, cross-grained cow, might have done the mischief, for as sorry as she now looked on the head of it."

The catechist did not regret the ignorance of the peasants, and with praiseworthy caution, resolved not to make them wiser on the subject. He only assisted in conveying the wounded milk-maid to the farm-house, having first despatched a messenger for a surgeon. The girl moaned when they stirred her, but gave no sign of consciousness. Her new friend saw her laid on a bed, and taking the dame of the house aside, soon convinced the good woman's understanding that, till the arrival of a surgeon, she alone ought to sit by the sufferer's couch, and hear her explanation; if, indeed, she should be able to give one by that time. The next instant he was on the road to the town.

In the suburbs he met the surgeon proceeding to visit his patient. It was most advisable to make a confident

of this gentleman, also ; accordingly, our young acquaintance stopped him, repeated much of what he had said to the farmer's wife, obtained the assurances he wished, and walked quietly forward.

It did not surprise him to observe, at the entrance of the town, groups of people looking around, as they conversed in a low tone, and turned their heads and eyes in the direction which the two bleeding Hessians must so very recently have taken. But, he was startled—though expecting something of the kind, too—when, as he gained the main street, drums beat to arms, trumpets sounded to the field, and soldiers of every description, regulars, militia, and the local yeomen, hurried, obeying the summons, to a well-known place of rendezvous.

He was received at the friend's house in which, for many months, he had been a visiter, with a welcome that suggested that his family had expected his return, in some alarm. His host, and his host's son, stood at the back of the servant who opened the door, and shook his hand warmly. A voice yet gentler than theirs, whispered his name through a half-open door in the hall, and he disappeared into the apartment to answer the summons as became him ; nor did he lead Bessie Gordon to the breakfast-parlour until he had made her the exclusive confidante of his morning's adventure, detailing every circumstance very minutely, for her satisfaction and assurance.

Breakfast was nearly over, when he asked—"And now, my good friends, what is the meaning of the excitement in which I find you all?"

"No one has told you, as you came along, Harry?" said Mr. Gordon.

"No!"

"Then you have yet to hear disagreeable news. Two of the Hessians of our garrison, on their way to General Sir A. D. with despatches, this morning, have been attacked by a body of rebels, who, unfortunately for me, seemed to be composed of my tenantry about Killane."

"Ay!" cried Harry, drily.

"Ay, indeed, and the two poor fellows are badly hurt;

and Sir A. D. is going to march out almost the whole garrison, to burn every cabin of the hamlet, if he cannot meet with the treacherous rascals."

"Ay!" repeated Harry, his brow knitting and his cheek reddening, to the surprise of his host; "and have *the two poor fellows* described the appearance of the rebels, sir? Were there any *women* among them?"

"Why, yes, as is almost always the case: one of whom, the men think, they have wounded."

"Ay!" still cried Harry, rising sternly while a party of horse trotted up to the hall door, and then a loud knocking resounded through the house.

"The General," resumed Mr. Gordon—"following up his intimation to me, even sooner than I expected."

"What intimation, sir?"

"That, before he proceeded to Killane, he would require my opinion as to those of my tenantry there, most likely, from symptoms of previous disaffection, to have headed the insurrection this morning,

"Mr. Gordon," resumed Henry, while they heard the General and his party ushered into an adjoining room, "there is now no time to inform you why I am very anxious to stand by your side during this interview, but I particularly request you to afford me that privilege."

"Henry Lane," answered his host, "your expression, when you came home just now—the preference I know you have for that morning walk towards Killane—your manner at breakfast—your present request—all convince me you can say something about the matter in question—is it so?"

"It is, Mr. Gordon."

"And you *do not* fear to stand by my side?"

His young guest scouted the notion.

"Although your old enemy, Kirk, is at the General's elbow?"

"Although the devil, instead of a dear friend of his, were there, Mr. Gordon."

They entered the General's presence together. He was a sharp-featured man; having a military air certainly—but one of an inferior kind. A scar through his lips, and

down his chin, argued, indeed, effective service; but it also added to the ungentle expression of his countenance, and did not combat the presumption that fitness of natural character, rather than high achievement in the field, had recommended him to his late and present situation of despotic chief, judge, and all but hangman, at a terrible and merciless crisis.

At his right hand stood Mr. Sheriff Kirk—also Captain Kirk; the second title having been conferred by a command in one of the yeomanry corps of the town. He wore, of course, his military uniform, and did not lack the air of a soldier. Nor were his cool grey eyes, his yellow cheeks, and his steady mouth, evidences of a merely civil energy of official character. A few words more, glancing at his previous history, are required, for the knowledge we need to have of this individual.

Ten years before, he had kept a very humble shop in the town. A large reward was offered for the apprehension of a notorious robber. Mr. Kirk courageously issued into the country—returned with the highwayman—got the reward—and never afterwards knew a poor day. Under the patronage of the noble person who dispensed corporate honours, he rose rapidly in the world. At the breaking out of the Rebellion, no man could be more active in discovering hidden traitors, and dragging them to justice; some said, indeed, that on the principle of “sure hide, sure find,” he might be supposed to be peculiarly adapted for the service. In the field, as a yeomanry officer, his zeal was equally conspicuous; for instance, after a skirmish with a band of United Irish, in a village some miles distant, two of the retreating peasants ran for shelter into a thatched chapel on the road-side, and Mr. Kirk pursued them, sword in hand, and despatched the superstitious rebels on the steps of their little altar,

Henry Lane, when his host presented him to Sir A. D., wondered at the coldness of the General's bow. The undisguised sneer of Mr. Kirk did not surprise him. Upon his arrival, as the visitor of his father's oldest friend, Bessie Gordon was from home, and amid the mixed society of the town, a daughter of the Captain-sheriff received

at his hands more passing gallantry than perhaps fell to the lot of the young ladies around her; but Bessie came—looked—and conquered; and, in consequence, Mr. Kirk and his “darling child” chose to consider themselves ill-used people. But we dare say the gentleman felt even more keenly a second injury. Henry Lane had snatched from his gripe an innocent man, from whose condemnation as a rebel, Mr. Kirk had expected to reap peculiar advantages.

Mr. Gordon preferred his own and his young friend’s request that Harry might be permitted to remain during the interview about to commence. The General and Mr. Kirk exchanged very expressive glances: and while, to Henry’s increased amazement, the former said—“Certainly; though we could not suppose the young gentleman would be so anxious about it,”—the latter, almost to his consternation, smiled.

“In fact, sir,” resumed Sir A. D., “our principal business here is—making as little noise as possible—to desire you to consider yourself a prisoner.”

“On what account?” asked Henry.

“Why, sir, we hope you may be able to tell us something of the insurrection of this morning;—you were observed on the road to Killane, hiding behind a fence, when, as is presumed, you found yourself likely to be overtaken by the retreating Hessians.”

Henry Lane now asked another, and a very impolitic question; one that seemed almost to imply guilt; instead of at once communicating the information it was his duty to submit. But his curiosity to ascertain who had observed him, when he felt convinced the Hessians had not, threw him off his guard.

“Observed! by whom?”—he demanded.

“I regret to say, by me, Mr. Lane,” continued Captain Kirk; “I happened to be in the fields at your back.”

“Then you dogged me, like the spy and informer you are, sir,” said the accused, giving way to youthful passion. He was severely checked by the General, and advised to speak more to the point. Much grieved and alarmed, his old host whispered him to be cool and collected: this, as

is sometimes the case with persons in his situation, only made him less tractable. He vociferated;—he gesticulated:—he unbuttoned his coat, violently; and there was an exclamation from the General and his prime-minister, as both pointed to a large bloody stain on his waistcoat. Henry had received it while assisting the unfortunate young woman to the farm-house; had buttoned his coat over it, as he returned to the town; had almost forgotten it, since; and had now unconsciously disclosed it. Feeling aware how much it must tell against him, he became silent and confused, and, to the scrutinizing eyes which observed him, appeared really guilty.

“Pray, Mr. Lane,” continued Sir A. D., “inform us, at last, if you please, why you concealed yourself from the Hessians, and in what manner your waistcoat became soiled.”

Courageously rallying, Henry said frankly what he had to say. The General and Mr. Kirk again glanced at each other; and the former, shaking his head, expressed his regret that, in the very improbable story submitted—and so tardily submitted—he saw little that ought to keep the matter from the ordinary test of a court-martial.

“Very well, sir,” said Henry, “only send for the poor girl, and if she is able to attend”—(and his blood grew chill at the thought that she might be dead, without having uttered a word!) “I can laugh with scorn at the result.”

The general believed that, whether she could attend or not, Mr. Lane would hardly be benefited; it was already in evidence from the two Hessians that they had wounded one—and only one—of the motley rabble; that one, a woman, and, necessarily, the witness appealed to; and any convenient story she might tell, was scarcely worth the trouble of sending for; particularly as a despatch to Killane must put the rebels on their guard against the intended attack; “and,” continued Sir A. D., “as we only await the closing of the present case to march for their position.”

Well aware of the prompt manner in which the General had hitherto deemed himself compelled to “close” such “cases” as “the present,” Henry again began to exclaim

against his mode of proceeding; "What! is an innocent man to be destroyed by the very villains he seeks to bring to justice?"

Mr. Gordon, quite terrified, raised his voice in entreaties for time and cool investigation. A whisper from the Captain-sheriff disposed of his appeal; and that gentleman then stepped out, and returned with two dragoons, who placed themselves at either side of the prisoner.

"In the name of common sense!" still conjured Henry, "how can I be supposed capable of the absurdity laid to my charge? My father's loyalty—as well known as are his rank and high character—my friends here—the first in your town—free from all taint,—how can suspicion fall on me? *I a rebel! I join with rebels in the fields!*"

"Mr. Lane may recollect that his late zeal on behalf of a known and marked rebel, might not have left *motives* quite unsuspected," said Mr. Kirk.

"Silence, paltry fellow!" cried the accused; "and now, sir A. D., I have but one remaining appeal to make from your court-martial—from even your order for a court-martial—from yourself, personally—and it is to the distinguished man who has been publicly appointed to succeed you in your command over us all; understand, therefore, distinctly, that I protest in his name, against your authority, and demand to be left—a prisoner, if necessary—for his disposal."

"You will understand, in return, sir, that although the gallant individual to whom you allude has, indeed, been nominated to relieve me of my painful responsibilities, I retain, even with his assent, the full powers they confer, until he personally requires a transfer of them at my hands," answered Sir A. D.

"But accountable to him, surely, for the use of what can be but delegated power, since his appointment," urged Mr. Gordon.

"You mistake, sir," said the General.

"He is expected this very day," resumed Henry.

"He *was*; but he is not, Mr. Lane. Two men of our garrison—of whom you know something—brought me a despatch from him a few hours ago, stating that, from a

great anxiety to cultivate anew an old friendship, he will stop and sleep at Lord N——'s, on the road to us. And so I have answered all your demands at length, and, out of respect to your host, perhaps without considering the situation in which I am placed. Now, please to attend us to the court-house."

"Come, then!" cried the prisoner; "and how could I have hoped better from a man, whose cruelly, and not whose honourable services, procured him his present butchering commission; and who dare not stand an appeal to the dignified commander, at length selected to rescue us from his despotism of blood?"—

"My old friend's son!" exclaimed Mr. Gordon, extending his arms, as Henry was led out after the General and Mr. Kirk. A shriek reached them; and ere he could embrace the father, the daughter was clinging to his neck.

"Fear nothing, Bessie—I am innocent."

"I know you are," answered the poor girl; "but is that a reason why I should fear nothing? Is that a reason why I should forget the sights we have unwillingly seen through the side panes of the old bow-window above stairs? Oh! Harry, remember the horrible day, when, in less than an hour after he was dragged from our table, we beheld poor young S—— led to their rooted gibbet, opposite their court-house! But *you* must be saved!—how—how—what is to be done?"

"I will go out to General K——," stammered Mr. Gordon, who, since Bessie's appearance, had stood with his back against the wall; and while he spoke, he fell. His daughter, screaming again, flung herself down by his side. The dragoons gained the hall with their prisoner;—she flew to him;—they forced her back; and a second time she was at her father's side, now as insensible as he; and Henry, accompanied by her brother, proceeded to the court-house.

Lord N——'s mansion, at which General K—— was spending the day, was about twelve miles distant from the town. An hour and a half after the occurrences related, he stood with his old friends before the steps of their hall-door, his hands behind his back, his grey head

bent towards his breast. The urbanity of a gentleman, and the light of a good heart, cast a dignity over his massive and hard-marked features. A female, followed by a servant, galloped up the avenue, seated on a spirited little steed, as was evident from the animal's fiery though graceful motions. She wore a lady's riding-habit, but her head was bare—her hat had fallen from her unheeded on the road; and when she swept nearer, her golden hair appeared flowing down her shoulder and around her face, young and fair as the morning; but like morning when its hues are washed out by tears. She must have caught a view of the persons she wished to see, at some distance, for she waved her light whip before they could hear her voice; and when the words she had long been uttering grew at last distinct, she pronounced his name.—He stepped forward.

"For life and death, General K——! for life and death!" she continued; "and not a moment—and not a word to spare;—order your horses, sir!—you are deputed to act for heaven, this day—you alone!—Come, sir, come!"

Amazed, admiring, sympathizing, and much excited, he prayed an explanation.

"Not if you mean *to act*! not if you *will* discharge your great duty! not if you shrink from murder done in your name!—your horses, sir!"

Overpowered by her contagious vehemence, he gave the order required.

"The carriage!" said Lady N——, whose pale cheeks and streaming eyes bespoke the excitement in which she also observed and listened—the carriage was in waiting, to take the party a ride through the grounds.

"Thanks," said the General; "and it is better, if this young lady must"—

"Must and will go back with you!" interrupted Bessie Gordon, jumping from her saddle; and almost stumbling, she was at the carriage door before he could offer his arm. The next moment they were whirled off, attended by the aides-de-camp, who had been ready mounted to accompany him on a very different excursion.

In broken sentences, Bessie now gave an explanation

of her hasty summons. Henry's confidential communication to her, before breakfast, enabled her to detail the whole of his case. Her companion listened most attentively. He inquired her lover's name. Bessie at last burst into tears as she gave it.

"Why, I know him," said General K——; "at least, I know his father; and may have seen him, when a child, at his father's table: he must be saved, even if he were guilty;—but we shall see."

"The time, sir! the time!" sobbed Bessie; "and we go so slow!"—The horses were proceeding at full gallop.

The General spoke out of the window to an aide-de-camp, desiring him to push forward at the utmost speed of his charger, and announce his approach to the court-martial; and the young man, stimulated by his interest for the beautiful and wretched Bessie Gordon, as well as by zeal in the service of his beloved commander, soon seemed to substantiate Bessie's charge against the very best gallop the carriage horses could assume. They lost sight of him in a few minutes.

"Is it over?" was her question, addressed to the first stranger she saw, as, an hour afterwards, the carriage rattled into the town; and twenty times she repeated it, although, either that it was not understood or heard, or that the people feared to answer her, no one replied. Approaching the court-house, she leaned out of the window, to look at the hideous gibbet;—its rope wavered in the breeze;—no more.

"Look! sir," she said, catching the general's arm, as she sank into her seat; "what do you think—*are* we too late?"

The carriage stopped;—the door was instantly opened, and an officer of the garrison appeared at it, saluting the General.

"My aide-de-camp, sir?" asked the new commander, getting down.

"I have the honour to await you here with a verbal despatch from him," replied the officer.

"Where is he, sir?" asked Bessie, jumping to her old protector's side, who repeated her question.

"He has gone forward to Killane, sir, fresh mounted."

"Then the court-martial *have* decided?" continued Bessie.

"They have, madam."

"And Mr. Lane?"

"Has been marched out with the troops, to undergo his sentence, upon the spot where"—

The officer ceased speaking, as Bessie dropped at his feet. He and the General raised her, and she was placed in her brother's arms, who came running down the street.

"Fresh horses for us also, sir," said General K——, addressing the officer, as he pointed to his remaining aides-de camp. While his commands were being obeyed, he walked up and down an open space before the court-house, his hands joined at his back, and his head bent as was customary with him. Other officers of the residue of the garrison left in town, and several of the persons who, before the proclamation of martial law, had wielded civil authority, approached to pay their respects. Suddenly he stopped, and glancing up at the gallows, said to the group generally, "take that down; its day is over." Then he resumed his short walk, and again stopping and scowling at the triangle which appeared in a corner of the space, added, "and down with that, too; *its* day had passed even before it was put up."

His horses were led out, and he and his aides-de-camp proceeded towards Killane, by the narrow hill-road upon which Henry Lane had seen the Hessians in the morning; the officer of the garrison riding in advance to show them the way. On approaching the hamlet, they met the second officer who had gone forward before them, standing over the sorry steed with which he had been supplied at the town; the animal had fallen under him. After a few words they passed him.

"Shall we come up with them, sir?" asked General K—— of the officer.

"I should hope so, sir, unless they have marched at almost double-quick time; yet, see there, sir! and hear that!"—a wreath of smoke burst up into the sunshine, beyond a quick turn of the road, and a cheer, simultane-

ously reached the party ;—" that must be the first firing of the enemy's cabins, and the execution of Mr. Lane's sentence must have preceded it."

General K—— spurred forward, passing his guide, so as to be the first at the turn of the road ; and here he said, " you are wrong, sir,—the troops are still in motion towards their point."

It was so. Sir A. D., with his force, had not yet gained the thatched hamlet of Killane ; and the smoke that had been observed, arose only from a solitary cabin on the road side, which, having been found deserted by the terrified inmates, was fired by Mr. Kirk's zealous yeomen. Now within hearing of the rear-guard of the column, General K—— cried " Halt ! halt !" and desired his aide-de-camp to advance, who, obeying his command, repeated the magical word " halt !" and added, in still louder tone, his commander's name. A halt quickly ensued, and the General galloped forward. Gaining the head of the line, he saw a young man, sitting on a horse led by a draagoon, his arms pinioned. Their eyes met ;—the General touched his old-fashioned cocked hat, and smiled.—Henry Lane, who, till that moment, had worn a firm brow and a flushed cheek, turned sickly pale, and would have fallen from his saddle, but for the assistance of his guards.

The veteran joined Sir A. D. and his staff, still more in front. The two Generals exchanged bows, and stood uncovered, as also did their attendant, while the whole line presented arms, and the trumpets and kettle-drums of the horse, and the bands of the infantry, played a salute. Now the little hamlet appeared in view, and from it came a wild and alarmed cry, in answer to the startling though cheery burst of martial music ; and presently, groups of men, women, and children, of every age, were seen running before the cabins, in great terror and disorder.

" The enemy, I suppose," said General K——, smiling ; " not in arms, though, and therefore scarcely worth our attention. Let us send out to reconnoitre, however, in hopes that they may deem us entitled to a better reception. Meantime, Sir A. D., I go towards the cabins."

Attended only by an aide-de-camp, he arrived at the farm-house to which the wounded milkmaid had been carried. The surgeon, still in attendance, pronounced her out of danger, and at last able to speak. General K—— heard, at her bedside, the communications she had already made to her mistress and to the surgeon. Of the latter, he inquired whether she could safely be removed to the town, travelling in an open litter, only as fast as the troops should march. The surgeon said she could; and then, giving the necessary orders, he left the farm-house.

In a contiguous field, he summoned back the reconnoitring parties, and learned from their report, that no enemy of any kind appeared in view. After this he rode to the nearest group of peasants, who, with much entreaty, awaited his approach; told the terrified people to go home and keep quiet; and lastly, returned to the troops on the road, and ordered them to march back the way they had come.

At the entrance to the town he whispered to his aide-de-camp, who trotted briskly forward. Arrived at the public parade, he halted the soldiers and dismissed them to their barracks: he then desired Sir A. D., the officers who generally formed his court-martial, and the prisoner, Henry Lane, to attend him to the court-house. As they proceeded up the steps of the building, Mr. Kirk, and many of his friends, exchanged eloquent glances at the disappearance of the gallows and the triangle.

The aide-de-camp who had gone forward, met his General in the court, and pointed out the two wounded Hessians, one in the dock, the other at a side-bar.

"Have you kept them separate, sir?" he asked.

"Strictly so, sir," answered the aide-de-camp.

"Gentlemen," he resumed, "we require some additional information touching the rebel movement of this morning; and without yet sitting as a court-martial, I wish to examine, in succession, these wounded men. Let one of them be led quite out of hearing. Let the other come on the table."

He was quickly obeyed. The Hessian selected as a first witness, again affirmed that he and his comrade had

been surprised by a band of rebels, at Killane, that morning; and, after wounding one only of the assailants—a woman—barely escaped with their lives. General K—— put questions, requiring minute accounts of the details of the affair, and received certain answers which he desired should be carefully written down. He then seemed casually to inquire what conversation had passed between the witness and his comrade upon the route home, after their escape;—the man hesitated. He raised his voice, knit his brow, and desired instantly a report of their whole conversation along the hill road, whatever it was. The Hessian now gave answers, which were also committed to writing.

“Let him withdraw, and bring up the other—still keeping them apart,” resumed General K——.

The second Hessian appeared in the evidence-chair. His general statement of the attack corroborated that of the first; but his account of specific details, already described by his comrade, was a new story altogether. And when asked to recollect and repeat their discourse on the road homewards, he made it consist of topics, which did not remotely resemble, even in matter, those sworn to by his friend.

“Let them come face to face,” was the General’s next command. Accordingly, they confronted each other; heard read the extraordinary clashings of their separate testimony, and were called on to reconcile them, if they could. The men were silent.

“Has the prisoner, Mr. Lane, any questions to propose to the witnesses?” asked General K——.

Henry said he would prefer to have them ask questions of one another, at his dictation. This was agreed to; and he proceeded fluently, in their own tongue.—

“The man whose sword-arm is disabled, shall say to his comrade, ‘Hans, bad work you have done for me, and I for you, all about a silly girl.’”

The Hessians started at these words—exchanged glances,—then looked consciously around,—and then bent their eyes on the table.

"If he does not speak, shall I give him the answer Hans gave him?" continued Henry.

"Do so, prisoner."

"Listen, then, Hans.—'Ay, Quinton; but blame your own greediness of the girl's smiles, by the side of an old friend.'"

Again the Hessians showed agitation.

"I continue, sir, speaking for Hans and Quinton, alternately."

Still the General assented.

"Well, Hans, here we ride back to head-quarters, without a smile of hers to boast of, between us."

"Ay; and in a plight we must account for, too, Quinton."

"Oh! the rebels have surprised us."

"Der deyvil! good!—but the girl may prate, unless her mouth is stopped."

"And I think I've stopped it, Hans: or, no matter: she was one of the ambuscade—half wild Irishmen, half wild Irishwomen;—so, let her tell her story;—who will believe it?"

"And such is the conversation," resumed Henry Lane, speaking for himself, "which I overheard between these two men, upon the hill-road from Killane, early this morning."

In answer to questions from General K——, he ended by describing his proceedings, after the Hessians passed him, down to the moment at which he left the farmhouse.

"Place them at the bar," said the General; "and now we form our court-martial."

The Hessians were formally arraigned, and the contradictions of their own testimony, coupled with Henry Lane's story, were taken as evidence against them.

"I have yet another witness," resumed General K——, glancing at his aide-de-camp. The young officer withdrew, and speedily returned, ushering to the table a litter, borne by soldiers, on which lay the wounded milkmaid. Her cruel assaulters stared in stupid terror upon her reclining form. The surgeon stood beside her, as in

feeble and hoarse accents, she deposed to the following facts:

While employed in milking her cows, two troopers, "with beard on their lips," stopped at the side of the pasture-field, looking towards her; it was "just the grey of the morning." Presently, they dismounted, and separately crossed the stile; one walking fast before the other, and both speaking loudly and angrily in "a fur'n speech." She screamed, attempted to run, and fell, from terror. Nearly at the same moment they broke into open quarrel, drew their swords, and cut at each other. She fainted;—on regaining her senses, she saw them standing, exhausted and bleeding. In a frenzy, she called out the names of her friends, and spoke as if many people were speeding to help her; the troopers looked around; again exchanged words, in a more friendly tone; came close to her; desired her to cease screaming; finally, beat her about the head, and stabbed her in the neck; and further she could tell nothing.

"The prisoner, Lane, has had opportunity to arrange this improbable story with the cunning girl," said Mr. Kirk.

"Impossible," answered the surgeon; "when I reached the poor creature, she was unable to utter a word; and she must have been still more unable to do so before my arrival."

"She does not identify the men," resumed the sheriff.

"The men confess their guilt," said the aide-de-camp, who stood near them.

"Let them die before the sun sets, notwithstanding," said General K——, "and release Mr. Lane."

"Come home Hal," cried young Gordon, grasping Henry Lane's hand.

"How is Bessie?" asked the liberated prisoner, on their way through the streets.

"In good hopes, since your return with old K——; and her father still able to congratulate you upon your escape from THE LAST OF THE STORM."

THE RIVAL DREAMERS.

MR. WASHINGTON IRVING has already given to the public a version of an American legend, which, in a principal feature, bears some likeness to the following transcript of a popular Irish one. It may, however, be interesting to show this very coincidence between the descendants of a Dutch Transatlantic colony, and the native peasantry of Ireland, in the superstitious annals of both. Our tale, moreover, will be found original in all its circumstances, that alluded to only excepted.

Shamus Dempsy returned a silent, plodding, sorrowful man, though a young one, to his poor home, after seeing laid in the grave his aged decrepit father. The last rays of the setting sun were glorious, shooting through the folds of their pavilion of scarlet clouds; the last song of the thrush, chanted from the bough nearest to his nest, into which, as soon as his vesper thanksgiving should be done, he intended to hop, was gladdening; the abundant, though but half-matured, crops around breathed of hope for the future; but Shamus's bosom was covered with the darkness that inward sunshine alone can illumine. The chord that should respond to song and melody had snapped in it; and for him the softly-undulating

fields of light-green wheat, or the silken-surfaced patches of barley, made a promise in vain. He was poor, penniless, friendless, and yet groaning under responsibilities; worn out by past and present suffering, and without a consoling prospect. His father's corpse had been just buried by a subscription among his neighbours, collected in an old glove, a penny or a half-penny from each, by the most active of the humble community to whom his sad state was a subject of pity; and in the wretched shed, which he called "home," a young wife lay on a truss of straw, listening to the hungry cries of two little children, and awaiting her hour to become the weeping mother of a third. And the recollection that, but for an act of domestic treachery experienced by his father and himself, both would have been comfortable and respectable in the world, aggravated the bitterness of the feelings in which Shamus contemplated his this evening's lot. He could himself faintly call to mind a time of early childhood, when he lived with his parents in a roomy, slated house, eating, and sleeping, and dressing well, and surrounded by servants and workmen; and he further remembered that a day of great affliction came, upon which strange and rude persons forced their way into the house, and, for some cause his infant observation did not reach, father, servants, and workmen, (his mother had just died,) were all turned out upon the road, and doomed to seek the shelter of a mean roof. But his father's discourse, since he gained the years of manhood, supplied Shamus with an explanation of all these circumstances, as follows.

Old Dempsy had been the youngest son of a large farmer, who divided his lands between two elder children, and destined Shamus's father to the church, sending him abroad for education, and, during its course, supplying him with liberal allowances. Upon the eve of ordination, the young student returned home to visit his friends; was much noticed by neighbouring small gentry of each religion; at the house of one of the opposite persuasion from his, met a sister of the proprietor, who had a fortune in her own right; abandoned his clerical views for her smiles; eloped with her; married her privately; in-

curred thereby the irremovable hostility of his own family ; but, after a short time, was received, along with his wife, by his generous brother-in-law, under whose guidance both became reputably settled in the house to which Shamus's early recollections pointed, and where, till he was about six years old, he passed indeed a happy childhood.

But a little previous to this time his mother's good brother died unmarried, and was succeeded by another of her brothers, who had unsuccessfully spent half his life as a lawyer in Dublin, and who, inheriting little of his predecessor's amiable character, soon showed himself a foe to her and her husband, professedly on account of her marriage with a Roman Catholic. He did not appear to their visit, shortly after his arrival in their neighbourhood, and he never condescended to return it. The affliction experienced by his sensitive sister, from this conduct, entailed upon her a premature accouchement, in which, giving birth to a lifeless babe, she unexpectedly died. The event was matter of triumph, rather than of sorrow, to her unnatural brother. For, in the first place, totally unguarded against the sudden result, she had died intestate : in the next place, he discovered that her private marriage had been celebrated by a Roman Catholic priest, consequently could not, according to law, hold good ; and again, could not give to her nominal husband any right to her property, upon which both had hitherto lived, and which was now the sole means of existence to Shamus's father.

The lawyer speedily set to work upon his statute points, and with little difficulty succeeded in supplying for Shamus's recollections a day of trouble, already noticed ; in fact, his father and he, now without a shilling, took refuge in a distant cabin, where, by the sweat of his parent's brow, as a labourer in the fields, the ill-fated hero of this story was scantily fed and clothed, until maturer years enabled him to relieve the old man's hand of the spade and sickle, and in turn labour for their common wants.

Shamus, becoming a little prosperous in the world, rented a few acres adjacent to his cabin, and—married.

The increase of his fields did not quite keep pace with the increase of his cares, in the persons of the new-comers, for whose well-being he was bound to provide: and his ray of success in life soon became over-clouded, by the calls of the landlord, and the tithe-proctor. In truth, three years after his marriage, he received a notice, which it were vain to oppose, to quit both his farm and his cabin, and leave his few articles of furniture behind.

At this juncture his father was bed-ridden, and his wife advanced in her third pregnancy. He put on his hat, walked to the door, fixed his eyes upon the ruins of an old abbey, which stood on the slope of an opposite hill, and formed his plan for present measures. By the next evening he had constructed a wattled shed, covered with rushes and leaves, against a gable in the interior of the ruin. Clearing away the nettles and other rank weeds, enclosed by his new house, he discovered a long slab on which was carved a cross, and letters illegible to his eye, and this he made his hearth-stone. To furnish the abode, he fetched two large stones, as seats for his wife and himself, shook straw in either corner, and laid in a bundle of twigs. Then he went to the cabin that was no longer his, sent on his wife and two children to the abbey, followed with his father on his back, and laid him upon one of the straw couches. Two days afterwards the old man was a corpse, and from his pauper-funeral we now see Shamus returning, and to such a home does he bend his heavy steps.

If to know that the enemy of his father and mother did not thrive on the spoils of his oppression, could have yielded Shamus any consolation in his lot, he had long ago become aware of circumstances calculated to give this negative comfort. His maternal uncle enjoyed, indeed, his newly acquired property, only a few years after it came into his possession. Partly on account of his cruelty to his relations, partly from a meanness and vulgarity of character, which soon displayed itself in his novel situation, and which, it was believed, had previously kept him in the lowest walks of his profession as a Dublin attorney, he found himself neglected and shunned by the

gentry of his neighbourhood. To grow richer than any who thus insulted him, to blazon abroad reports of his wealth, and to watch opportunities of using it to their injury, became the means of revenge adopted by the *parvenu*. His legitimate income not promising a rapid accomplishment of this plan, he ventured, using precautions that seemingly set suspicion at defiance, to engage in smuggling adventures on a large scale, for which his proximity to the coast afforded the local opportunity. Notwithstanding all his pettifogginge leanness, the ex-attorney was detected, however, in his illegal traffic, and fined to an amount which swept away half his real property. Driven to desperation by the publicity of his failure, as well as by the failure itself, he tried another grand effort to retrieve his fortune; was again surprised by the revenue officers; in a personal struggle with them, at the head of his band, killed one of their body; immediately absconded from Ireland; for the last twenty years had not been authentically heard of; but, it was believed, lived under an assumed name in London, deriving an obscure existence from some mean pursuit, of which the very nature enabled him to gratify propensities to drunkenness and other vices, learned during his first career in life.

All this Shamus knew, though only from report, inasmuch as his uncle had exiled himself while he was yet a child, and without previously having become known to the eyes of the nephew he had so much injured. But if Shamus occasionally drew a bitter and almost savage gratification from the downfall of his inhuman persecutor, no recurrence to the past could alleviate the misery of his present situation. He passed under one of the capacious open arches of the old abbey, and then entered his squalid shed, reared against its wall, his heart as shattered and as trodden down as the ruins around him. No words of greeting ensued between him and his equally hopeless wife, as she sat on the straw of her bed, rocking to sleep, with feeble and mournful cries, her youngest infant. He silently lighted a fire of withered twigs on his ready-furnished hearth-stone; put to roast among their embers a few potatoes which he had begged during the

day ; divided them between her and her crying children ; and as the moon, risen high in the heavens, warned him that night asserted her full empire over the departed day, Shamus sank down upon the couch from which his father's mortal remains had lately been borne, supperless himself, and dinnerless too, but not hungry ; at least not conscious, or recollecting that hē was.

His wife and little ones soon slept soundly, but Shamus lay for hours inaccessible to nature's claims for sleep as well as for food. From where he lay he could see, through the open front, of his shed, out into the ruins abroad ; and after much abstraction in his own thoughts, the silence, the extent, and the peculiar desolation of the scene, almost spiritualized by the magic effect of alternate moonshine and darkness, of objects and of their parts, at last diverted his mind, though not to relieve it. He remembered distinctly, for the first time, where he was ; an intruder among the dwellings of the dead ; he called to mind, too, that the present was their hour for revealing themselves among the remote loneliness and obscurity of their crumbling and intricate abode : and, as his eye fixed upon a distant stream of cold light, or of blank shadow, either the wavering of some feathery scion from the walls, or the flitting of some night bird over the roofless aisle, made motion which went and came during the instant of his alarmed start, or else some disembodied sleeper around had challenged and evaded his vision, so rapidly as to baffle even the accompaniment of thought. Shamus would, however, recur, during these entrancing aberrations, to his more real causes for terror ; and he knew not, and to this day cannot distinctly tell, whether he waked or slept, when a new circumstance absorbed his attention. The moon struck fully, under his propped roof, upon the carved slab he had appropriated as a hearth-stone, and turning his eye to the spot, he saw the semblance of a man advanced in years, though not very old, standing motionless, and very steadfastly regarding him ; the still face of the figure shone like marble in the night-beam, without giving any idea of the solidity of that material ; the long and deep shadows thrown by the forehead over

the eyes, left those usually expressive features vague and uncertain ; upon the head was a close-fitting black cap, the dress was a loose-sleeved, plaited garment of white, descending to the ground, and faced and otherwise chequered with black, and girded round the loins ; exactly the costume which Shamus had often studied in a little framed and glazed print, hung up in the sacristy of the humble chapel recently built in the neighbourhood of the ruin, by a few descendants of the great religious fraternity to whom, in its day of pride, the abbey had belonged. As he returned very inquisitively, though as he avers, not now in alarm, the fixed gaze of his midnight visitor, a voice reached him, and he heard these strange words :

“Shamus Dempsy, go to London Bridge, and you will be a rich man.”

“Murther ! how, your Reverence ?” cried Shamus jumping up from his straw ; but the figure was gone ; and stumbling among the black embers on the remarkable place where it had stood, he fell prostrate, experiencing a change of sensation, and of observance of objects around, which might be explained by supposing a transition from a sleeping to a waking state of mind.

The rest of the night he slept little, thinking of the advice he had received, and of the mysterious personage who gave it. But he resolved to say nothing about his vision, particularly to his wife, lest, in her present state of health, the frightful story might distress her ; and as to his own conduct respecting it, he determined to be guided by the future,—in fact, he would wait to see if his counsellor came again. And he did come again, appearing in the same spot at the same hour of the night, and wearing the same dress, though not the same expression of feature : for the shallow brows now slightly frowned, and a little severity mingled with the former steadfastness of look.

“Shamus Dempsy, why have you not gone to London Bridge, and your wife so near the time when she will want what you are to get by going there ? Remember this is my second warning.”

"Musha, your Reverence, an' what am I to do on Lunnon Bridge?"

Again he arose to approach the figure; again it eluded him; again a change occurred in the quality of the interest with which he regarded the admonition of his visitor; and again he passed a day of doubt as to the propriety of undertaking what seemed to him little less than a journey to the world's end, without a penny in his pocket, and upon the eve of his wife's accouchement, merely in obedience to a recommendation which, according to his creed, was not yet sufficiently strongly given, even were it under any circumstances to be adopted. For Shamus had often heard, and firmly believed that a dream or a vision, instructing one how to procure riches, ought to be experienced three times before it became entitled to attention.

He lay down, however, half hoping that his vision might thus recommend itself to his notice; it did so.

"Shamus Dempsey," said the figure, looking more angry than ever, "you have not yet gone to London Bridge, although I hear your wife crying out to bid you go. And, remember, this is my third warning."

"Why, then, turther-an-ouns, your Reverence, just stop and tell me——"

Ere he could utter another word the holy visitant disappeared, in a real passion at Shamus's qualified curse; and, at the same moment, his confused senses recognized the voice of his wife, sending up from her straw pallet the cries that betoken a mother's destined travail. Exchanging a few words with her, he hurried away, professing to call up, at her cabin window, an old crone who sometimes attended the very poorest women in Nance Dempsey's situation."

"Hurry to her, Noreen, a-cuishla, and do the best it's the will of God to let you do. And tell her from me, Noreen,———" he stopped, drawing in his lip, and clutching his cudgel hard.

"Shamus, what ails you avich?" asked old Noreen; "what ails you, to make the tears run down in the grey o' the morning?"

"Tell her from me," continued Shamus, "that it's from the bottom o' the heart I'll pray, morning and evening, and fresh and fasting, maybe, to give her a good time of it; and to show her a face on the poor child that's coming likelier than the two that God sent afore it; and that I'll be thinking o' pecturin' it to my own mind, though I'll never see it far away."

"Musha, Shamus, what are you speaking of?"

"No matther, Noreen, only God be wid you, and wid her, and wid the weenocks; and tell her what I bid you. And more-be-token, tell her that poor Shamus quits her in her throuble, with more love from the heart out, than he had for her the first day they come together: and I'll come back to her, at any rate, sooner or later, richer or poorer, or as bare as he went—and may be not so bare either.—But God only knows. And so the top o' the morning to you, Noreen, and don't let her want the mouthful o' praties while I'm on my thravels; for this," added Shamus, as he bounded off, to the consternation of old Noreen,— "this is the very morning, and the very minute that, if I mind the dhrame at all at all, I ought to mind it;—ay without ever turning back to get a look from her, that 'ud kill the heart in my body entirely."

Without much previous knowledge of the road he was to take, Shamus walked and begged his way along the coast to the town where he might hope to embark for England. Here the captain of a merchantman agreed to let him work his passage to Bristol, whence he again walked and begged into London.

Without taking rest or food Shamus proceeded to London Bridge, often put out of his course by wrong directions, and as often by forgetting or misconceiving true ones. It was with old London Bridge that Shamus had to do—(not the old one last pulled down, but its more-reverend predecessor.)—which, at that time, was lined at either side by quaintly-fashioned houses, mostly occupied by shop-keepers, so that the space between presented, perhaps, the greatest thoroughfare then known in the Queen of Cities. And at about two o'clock in the afternoon, barefooted, ragged, fevered and agitated, Shamus

mingled with the turbid human stream, that roared and chafed over the as restless and as evanescent stream which buffeted the arches of old London Bridge. In a situation so novel to him so much more extraordinary in the reality than his anticipation could have fancied, the poor and friendless stranger felt overwhelmed. A sense of forlornness, of insignificance, and of terror, seized upon his faculties. From the stare, or the sneers, or the jostles of the iron-nerved crowd, he shrank with glances of wild timidity, and with a heart as wildly timid as were his looks. For some time he stood or staggered about, unable to collect his thoughts, or to bring to mind what was his business there. But when Shamus became able to refer to the motive of his pauper journey, from his native solitudes into the thick of such a scene, it was no wonder that the zeal of superstition totally subsided amid the astounding truths he witnessed. In fact, the bewildered simpleton now regarded his dream as the merest chimera; and hastily escaping from the thoroughfare, sought out some wretched place of repose suited to his wretched condition, and there cried himself asleep, in self-accusations at the thought of poor Nance at home, and in utter despair of all his future prospects.

At day break the next morning he awoke, a little less agitated, but still with no hope. He was able, however, to resolve upon the best course of conduct now left open to him; and he arranged immediately to retrace his steps to Ireland, as soon as he should have begged sufficient alms to speed him a mile on the road. With this intent he hastily issued forth, preferring to challenge the notice of chance passengers, even at the early hour of dawn, than to venture again, in the middle of the day, amongst the dreaded crowds of the vast city. Very few, indeed, were the passers-by whom Shamus met during his straggling and stealthy walk through the streets, and those of a description little able or willing to afford a half-penny to his humbled, whining suit, and to his spasmed lip and watery eye. In what direction he went Shamus did not know; but, at last, he found himself entering upon the scene of his yesterday's terror. Now, however, it pre-

sented nothing to renew its former impression. The shops at the sides of the bridge were closed, and the occasional stragglers of either sex who came along inspired Shamus, little as he knew of a great city, with aversion rather than with dread; and, in the quietness and security of his present position, Shamus was both courageous and weak enough again to summon up his dream: "Come," he said, "since I *am* on Lunnon Bridge, I'll walk over every stone of it, and see what good that will do."

He valiantly gained the far end. Here one house, of all that stood upon the bridge, began to be opened: it was a public-house, and, by a sidelong glance as he passed, Shamus thought that, in the person of a red-cheeked, red-nosed, sunk-eyed, elderly man, who took down the window-shutters, he recognised the proprietor. This person looked at Shamus, in return, with peculiar scrutiny. The wanderer liked neither his regards nor the expression of his countenance, and quickened his steps onward until he cleared the bridge. "But I'll walk it over at the other side, now," he bethought, after allowing the publican time to finish opening his house, and retire out of view.

But repassing the house, the man still appeared, leaning against his door-jamb, and as if waiting for Shamus's return, whom upon this second occasion, he eyed more attentively than before.

"Sorrow's in him," thought Shamus; "have I two heads on me; that I'm such a sight to him? But who cares about his pair of ferret-eyes? I'll thrudge down the middle stone of it, at any rate." And accordingly he again walked towards the public-house, keeping the middle of the bridge.

"Good-morrow, friend," said the publican, as Shamus a third time passed his door.

"Sarvant kindly, Sir," answered Shamus, respectfully pulling down the brim of his hat, and increasing his pace.

"An early hour you choose for a morning walk," continued his new acquaintance.

"Brave and early, faix, Sir," said Shamus still hurrying off.

"Stop a bit," resumed the publican. Shamus stood

still. "I see you're a countryman of mine—an Irishman; I'd know one of you at a look, though I'm a long time out of the country. And you're not very well off on London Bridge this morning, either."

"No, indeed, Sir," replied Shamus, beginning to doubt his skill in physiognomy, at the stranger's kind address; "but as badly off as a body'd wish to be."

"Come over to look for the work?"

"Nien, Sir; but come out this morning to beg a ha'penny, to send me a bit of the road home."

"Well, here's a silver sixpence without asking; and you'd better sit on the bench by the door here, and eat a crust and a cut of cheese, and drink a drop of good ale, to break your fast."

With profuse thanks, Shamus accepted this kind invitation; blaming himself at heart for having allowed his opinion of the charitable publican to be guided by the expression of the man's features. "Handsome is that handsome does," was Shamus's self-correcting reflection.

While eating his bread and cheese, and drinking his strong ale, they conversed freely together, and Shamus's heart opened more and more to his benefactor. The publican repeatedly asked him what had brought him to London: and though—half out of prudence, and half out of shame—the dreamer at first evaded the question, he felt it at last impossible to refuse a candid answer to his generous friend. "Why, then, Sir, only I am such a big fool for telling it to you, it's what brought me to Lunnon Bridge was a quare dhrame I had at home in Ireland, that tould me just to come here, and I'd find a pot of gould:" for such was the interpretation given by Shamus to the vague admonition of his visionary counsellor.

His companion burst into a loud laugh, saying after it, "Pho, pho, man, don't be so silly as to put faith in non-sensical dreams of that kind. Many a one like it I have had, if I would bother my head with them. Why, within the last ten days, while you were dreaming of finding a pot of gold on London Bridge, I was dreaming of finding a pot of gold in Ireland."

"Murther, and were you, Sir?" asked Shamus, laying down his empty pint.

"Ay, indeed; night after night an old friar, with a pale face, and dressed all in white and black, and a black skull-cap on his head, came to me in a dream, and bid me go to Ireland, to a certain spot, in a certain county that I know very well, and under the slab of his tomb, that has a cross and some old Romish letters on it, in an old abbey I often saw before now, I'd find a treasure that would make me a rich man all the days of my life."

"Musha, Sir," asked Shamus, scarce able prudently to control his agitation, "and did he tell you that the treasure lay buried there ever so long under the open sky and the ould walls?"

"No; but he told me I was to find the slab covered in by a shed, that a poor man had lately built inside the abbey for himself and his family."

"Whoo, by the powers!" shouted Shamus, at last thrown off his guard by the surpassing joy derived from this intelligence, as well as by the effects of the ale; and, at the same time, he jumped up, cutting a caper with his legs, and flourishing his shilelagh.

"Why, what's the matter with you?" asked his friend, glancing at him a frowning and misgiving look.

"We ax pardon, Sir." Shamus rallied his prudence. "An' sure, sorrow a thing is the matter wid me, only the dhrop, I believe, made me do it, as it ever and always does, good luck to it for the same. An' isn't what we were spaking about the biggest *raumaush** undher the sun, Sir? Only it's the laste bit in the world quare to me, how you'd have the dhrame about your own country, that you didn't see for so many years, Sir,—for twenty long years, I think you said, Sir?" Shamus had now a new object in putting his sly question.

"If I said so, I forgot," answered the publican, his suspicions of Shamus at an end; "but it is about twenty years, indeed, since I left Ireland."

"And by your speech, Sir, and your dacency, I'll en-

* Nonsense.

gage you were in a good way in the poor place, afore you left it?"

"You guess correctly, friend. (The publican gave way to vanity.) Before misfortune came over me, I possessed, along with many a good hundred acres besides, the very ground that the old ruin I saw, in the foolish dream I told you, stands upon."

"An' so did my curse-o'-God-uncle," thought Shamus his heart's blood beginning to boil, though, with a great effort, he kept himself seemingly cool. "And this is the man forment me, if he answers another word I'll ax him.—Faix, Sir, and sure that makes your dhrame quarer than ever; and the ground the ould abbey is on, Sir, and the good acres round it, did you say they lay somewhere in the poor country myself came from?"

"What country is that, friend?" demanded the publican again, with a studious frown.

"The ould county Monaghan, sure, Sir," replied Shamus, very deliberately.

"No, but the county of Clare," answered his companion.

"Was it?" screamed Shamus, again springing up; and the cherished hatred of twenty years imprudently bursting out, his uncle lay stretched at his feet, after a renewed flourish of his cudgel. "And do you know who you are telling it to this morning? Did you ever hear that the sisther you kilt, left a bit of a *gorsoon* behind her, that one day or other might overhear you? Ay," he continued, keeping down the struggling man, "*it is* poor Shamus Dempsy that's kneeling by you; ay—and that has more to tell you. The shed built over the old friar's tombstone was built by the hands you feel on your throttle, and that tombstone is his hearthstone; and——" continued Shamus, beginning to bind the prostrate man with a rope, snatched from the bench near them—"while you lie here a while, an' no one to help you, in the cool of the morning, I'll just take a start of you on the road home to lift the flag and get the threasure—and follow me, if you dare! You know there's good money bid for your head in Ireland—so here goes! Yes, faith and wid this—*this* to

help me on the way!" He snatched up a heavy purse, which had fallen from his uncle's pocket in the struggle. "And sure, there's neither hurt nor harm in getting back a little of a body's own from you; a bright good morning, uncle, dear!"

Shamus dragged his manacled relative into the shop, quickly shut to and locked the door, flung the key over the house into the Thames, and the next instant was running at headlong speed.

He was not so deficient in the calculations of common sense, as to think himself yet out of his uncle's power. It appeared, indeed, pretty certain, that neither for the violence done to his person, nor for the purse appropriated by his nephew, the outlawed murderer would raise a hue and cry after one, who, aware of his identity, could deliver him up to the laws of his country. But Shamus felt certain that it would be a race, between him and his uncle, for the treasure that lay under the friar's tombstone:—his simple nature supplied no stronger motive for a pursuit, on the part of a man whose life now lay in the breath of his mouth. Full of his own conviction, however, Shamus saw he had not a moment to lose, until the roof of his shed in the old abbey again sheltered him. So, freely making use of his uncle's guineas, he purchased a strong horse in the outskirts of London, and to the surprise, if not under the heavy suspicions of the vender, set off at a gallop upon the road by which he had, the day before, gained the great metropolis.

A ship was ready to sail at Bristol for Ireland; but, to Shamus's discomfiture, she waited for a wind. He got aboard, however, and in the darksome and squalid hold often knelt down, and with clasped hands, and panting breast, petitioned heaven for a favourable breeze. But from morning until evening the wind remained as he had found it, and Shamus despaired. His uncle, meantime, might have reached some other port, and embarked for their country. In the depth of his anguish he heard a brisk bustle upon deck, clambered up to investigate its cause, and found the ship's sails already half unfurled to a wind that promised to bear him to his native shores by the

next morning. The last light of day yet lingered in the heavens: he glanced, now under way, to the quay of Bristol. A group, who had been watching the departure of the vessel, turned round to note the approach to them of a man, who ran furiously towards the place where they stood, pointing after her, and evidently speaking with vehemence, although no words reached Shamus's ear. Neither was his eye sure of this person's features, but his heart read them distinctly. A boat shot from the quay; the man stood up in it, and its rowers made a signal.

Shamus stepped to the gangway, as if preparing to hurl his pursuer into the sea. The captain took a speaking-trumpet, and, informing the boat that he could not stop an instant, advised her to wait for another merchantman, which would sail in an hour. And, during and after his speech, his vessel ploughed cheerily on, making as much way as she was adapted to accomplish.

Shamus's bosom felt lightened of its immediate terror, but not freed of apprehension for the future. The ship that was to sail in an hour haunted his thoughts: he did not leave the deck, and, although the night proved very dark, his anxious eyes were never turned from the English coast. Unusual fatigue and want of sleep now and then overpowered him, and his senses swam in a wild and snatching slumber; but from this he would start, crying out and clinging to the cordage, as the feverish dream of an instant presented him with the swelling canvass of a fast-sailing ship, which came suddenly bursting through the gloom of midnight, alongside of his own. Morning dawned really to unveil to him the object of his fears, following almost in the wake of her rival. He glanced in the opposite direction, and beheld the shores of Ireland; in another hour he jumped upon them; but his enemy's face watched him from the deck of the companion vessel, now not more than a few ropes' lengths distant.

Shamus mounted a second good horse, and spurred towards home. Often did he look back, but without seeing any cause for increased alarm. As yet, however, the road had been level and winding, and, therefore, could

not allow him to span much of it at a glance. After noon, it ascended a high and lengthened hill, surrounded by wastes of bog. As he gained the summit of this hill, and again looked back, a horseman appeared, sweeping to its foot. Shamus galloped at full speed down the now quickly-falling road; then along its level continuation for about a mile; and then up another eminence more lengthened, though not so steep as the former; and from it still he looked back, and caught the figure of the horseman breaking over the line of the hill he had passed. For hours such was the character of the chase; until the road narrowed, and began to wind amid an uncultivated and uninhabited mountain wilderness. Here Shamus's horse tripped and fell; the rider little injured, assisted him to his legs, and, with lash and spur, re-urged him to pursue his course. The animal went forward in a last effort, and, for still another span of time, well befriended his master. A rocky valley, through which both had been galloping, now opened at its further end, presenting to Shamus's eye, in the distance, the sloping ground, and the ruin which, with its mouldering walls, encircled his poor home; and the setting sun streamed golden rays through the windows and rents of the old abbey.

The fugitive gave a weak cry of joy, and lashed his beast again. The cry seemed to be answered by a shout; and a second time after a wild plunge, the horse fell, now throwing Shamus off with a force that left him stunned. And yet he heard the hoofs of another horse come thundering down the rocky way; and, while he made a faint effort to rise on his hands, and look at his pursuer, the horse and horseman were very near, and the voice of his uncle cried "Stand!" at the same time that the speaker fired a pistol, of which the ball struck a stone at Shamus's foot. The next moment his uncle, having left his saddle, stood over him, presenting a second pistol, and spoke in a low but distinct voice.

"Spawn of a beggar! This is not merely for the chance of riches given by our dreams, though it seems, in the teeth of all I ever thought, that the devil tells truth at last. No, nor it is not quite for the blow; but it is to close

the lips that with a single word, can kill me. You die, to let me live !”

“ Help !”—aspirated Shamus’s heart, turning itself to Heaven—“ help, me, but now, not for the sake of the gould either—but for the sake of them that will be left on the wide world without me—for them help me great God !”

Hitherto his weakness and confusion had left him passive. Before his uncle spoke the last words, his silent prayer was offered, and Shamus had jumped upon his assailant. They struggled, and dragged each other down. Shamus felt the muzzle of the pistol at his breast ; heard it snap—but only snap ; he seized and mastered it, and once more his uncle was at the mercy of his nephew. Shamus’s hand was raised to deal a good blow ; but he checked himself, and addressed the almost senseless ears of his captive.

“ No ; you’re my mother’s blood, and a son of hers will never draw it from your heart ; but I can make sure of you again,—stop a bit.”

He ran to his own prostrate horse, took off its bridle and its saddle-girth, and with both secured his uncle’s limbs, beyond all possibility of the struggler being able to escape from their control.

“ There,” resumed Shamus, “ lie there till we have time to send an ould friend to see you, that, I’ll go bail, will take as good care of your four bones as I ever did, my life long. And do you know where I’m going now ? You told me on Lunnon Bridge, that you knew *that*, at least,”—(pointing to the abbey,) “ ay, and the quare ould Romish hearthstone that’s to be found in it. And so look at this, uncle, honey,”—(he vaulted upon his relation’s horse,) “ I’m just goin’ to lift it off o’ the barrel-pot full of good ould gould, and you have only to cry halves, and you’ll get it as sure as that the big divvle is in the town you came from.”

Nance Dempsy was nursing her new-born babe, sitting up in her strait, and doing very well after her late illness, when old Noreen tottered in from the front of the ruin, to tell her that “ the body they were just speaking about was

driving up the hill, mad, like as if 'twas his own sperit in great throuble ;” and the listener had not recovered from her surprise, when Shamus ran into the shed, flung himself kneeling by her side, caught her in his arms, then seized her infant, covered it with kisses, and then roughly throwing it into her lap, turned to the fire-place, raised one of the rocky seats lying near it, poised the ponderous mass over the hearth-stone, and shivered into pieces, with one crash, that solid barrier between him and his visionary world of wealth.

“It’s cracked he is, out an’ out, of a certainty,” said Nance, looking terrified at her husband.

“Nothing else I am!” shouted Shamus, after groping under the broken slab ; “An’, for a token, get along with yourself out of this, old gran !”

He started up, and seized her by the shoulder ; Noreen remonstrated ; he stooped for a stone ; she ran ; he pursued her to the arches of the ruin ; she stopped half way down the descent ; he pelted her with clods to the bottom, along a good piece of her road homeward ; and then, dancing back into his wife’s presence —

“Now, Nance,” he cried, “now that we’re by ourselves, what noise is this like !”

“And he took out han’fuls after han’fuls of the ould gould afore her face, my dear,” added the original narrator of this story ; “an’ after the gaugers, and their crony, ould Nick, ran off wid the uncle of him, Nance and he, and the childer, lived together in their father’s and mother’s house, and if they didn’t live and die happy, I wish that you and I may.”

THE SUBSTITUTE.

NAPOLEON wanted a fresh supply of "food for powder," and so urgently, that the time usually allowed, even during the war, between the choice of a conscript and his departure for actual service, became limited upon this occasion to a few days.

In many a village through France, the winter's morning which ushered in the day upon which the peasant lads were to "*tirer leur sort*," in the different adjacent towns, presented scenes of trembling bustle. We are upon the high road outside one little hamlet. Two young fellows pass us, arm in arm, talking earnestly, though in a low tone. They are brothers, the only support of an aged and feeble mother. The elder being *chef de famille*, since his father's death, is not called upon to attend the mayor and sub-prefect, in the town towards which they walk; he only conveys the younger lad a little way on the road, to bid God bless him, and deliver him from a "*mauvais numero*." You may guess, indeed, from the patched working-dress of the one, that it is not his intention to accompany his (unwillingly) holiday-clad brother far out of the village; and you may infer that the necessity of

not missing a single day of agricultural labour sends him back to the farmer's team or barn—He must retrace his steps already. The brothers stop at the bottom of the first little hill speak a moment to each other, doff their caps, kiss cheeks, and part. The *cadet* bounds up the road bravely, at once to disguise his feelings and make a little show of response to the call of "glory and country." As the *ainé* repasses you, his step is heavy, his head drooped, his hands clenched, as they swing at his sides, and his eyes—but he will not let you see *them*.

Another pair approach—a lad and a girl. He is laughing, or doing his best to laugh; she is shedding tears, though sometimes she smiles too. Are they brother and sister?—Hardly. Their arms happen to be interlaced at one another's backs—and observe how expressively he—or she—or both (fie!) kiss. Let them go their ways in peace, and without arousing excessive sympathy. He is the youngest of five stout sons, whose father and mother are living and thriving, and may pretty well be spared as a contribution from his native village to national honour and glory: and though 'tis interesting and pleasing to witness the romantic distress of the young couple,—lovers according to the rules, that is, with the consent of both their families—yet they are too young to be married yet a-while; and Arriette will be constant—if she can; and he may come home an officer, or a corporal at least; or if he never come home—why then, Arriette will be very, very much afflicted. They disappear from us over the hill together, and it seems she has got leave to accompany him to the town, that she may the sooner learn whether he is to "*tomber*" or not.

A middle-aged man and his wife, leaning at either side upon their son, now attract our notice. "Still, one should always live in good hopes, *mon enfant*," says the mother, while passing by us: but even her voice does not support the recommendation of her words. In fact, her hopes of Clovis drawing a "good number," are very slight, and a kind of superstition augments her apprehensions for his lot. Among the peasantry of France it goes as a rule that if one of a family of many sons is cast as a conscript,

the others, from time to time, are sure to share his fate : and she has some reason for putting vague faith in the influence of the supposed fatality. About seven years before, her eldest boy, after drawing a "bad number," joined the army, and fell in his first battle-field. Another conscription was ordered, and her second fared as his brother had done. Another and her third, left her, and soon returned badly wounded ; and now creeps about her cottage drooping, pale, and unable to work. The fourth is on his way to try his fortune—and he is her last, too—that is, the last able to help her and his father, for little Pierre is only ten.—God speed them, the old couple, this day,—and may they march home, Clovis between them, to supper, a happy pair.

Standing by the road-side to witness the departure of these and many other villagers, for the town, our position was at one of the piers of an avenue of elm trees, which led up to a château of some respectability. Presently voices sounded coming down the avenue, and many humble groups on the high road stopped to take off their caps, and bow, or else to simper and courtesy, and give their "*bon jour*" to the speakers, who soon joined them.

"Good day, Mademoiselle Hortense—good day, Monsieur François," said many kind and respectful voices, accompanied by the smiles and looks and action which peasants out of France know nothing of.

Mademoiselle Hortense was a young lady of about twenty, her height good, her figure straight as a poplar, her carriage free, noble—all but haughty—and yet it was simple, too. No one called her beautiful ; but every one spoke of the spirit and expression of her face—and indeed it could not be seen once, and soon forgotten. Its complexion was almost Moorish ; perhaps her ancestors had not escaped, in times gone, some contact with Oriental blood, when the south of France was partially inhabited by swarthy children of the sun—and from the south, we have heard, her family first came into the almost extreme northern province which is now country to her. Hortense's eye too—her round, powerful, fascinating black eye, shaded by her intensely black hair, had a fit-

fully firm glance, such, it is said, (though softened in her) as struck with astonishment, if with nothing else, the good citizens of Paris, when the bold and brave Marseillois suddenly appeared in their streets, chanting their tremendous hymn, and glaring upon the new objects around them, with an expression traced to their mixed descent from infidel and Christian. But let not an illustration unfeminize, in the slightest degree, *la belle et douce Hortense*. If nature gave her a feature which truly revealed spirit and power, another was conferred abounding with softness and goodness—her mouth—beautiful mouth! narrow, pulpy, richly-coloured, out-breathing, and constantly putting in play two dimples: nay, a particular individual has averred that Hortense's eyes, alone with his, were, of all features of her face, the gentlest, most amiable, kindest, best.

However, this is a little too much of Hortense, devotedly as we love her. Her companion, whom the peasants have called Monsieur François, is to be introduced. He was a young man of two-and-twenty, it was said—nay, insisted on—else he would not have appeared in the avenue this morning; and yet, from his slight figure, a little stooped and not strongly knit, and from his boyish, pale, unblemished and unwhiskered face, he did not appear to be as old as the girl who leaned on his arm.

"And is no one to be spared, in these times, Mademoiselle Hortense," continued an old man, after he had saluted her, "not even the best among us! And must Monsieur François take his chance with the poorest?"

"My brother," answered Hortense, "is proud to take his chance for serving his country and his emperor, at the side of the other brave youths—no matter how poor—of our district."

"The call to war, Oudard," added François, smiling at his old neighbour, "has never yet been neglected by one of my family."

The old man, with his parting compliment, bowed, put on his battered old hat, and left them. The brother and sister stood still at the bottom of the avenue, both looking in the same direction.

"'Tis time Eugène were here, if he *is* to accompany me to the town," resumed François.

"Yes, indeed," replied Hortense, "and he is not generally so unpunctual;—but, *mon frère*, you must feel the morning air very cold, for you tremble a little?"

"Do I!—'tis nothing, Hortense;—ten minutes' brisk walking towards the town will cure it, if our friend would only come as he promised."

"Here he is, then," said Hortense, as the young man they expected jumped over a stile at the other side of the road, nearly opposite to them.

Eugène was twenty-five; well-formed, well-featured, manly-looking, but rustic. He wanted something of the elevated character which stamped the appearance of Hortense and François, though in such different ways. Hortense, however, did not seem to think contemptuously of his agricultural mannerism, as he walked across the road, bowing and smiling to her. She blushed, to be sure—that is, her deep brunette cheeks, became of a sudden, of a rich, neutralized red colour; but we are certain it was not because she was ashamed of him that Hortense blushed.

After greetings, a few words served to make François and Eugène ready to start for the town. "God bless you, *mon frère*!" said Hortense, offering her cheek, while her noble eyes were now moist and half closed—"God bless you—and though, as you have yourself just said, no man of our ancient family ever yet turned an indifferent ear to the call of country and of honour, still *mon frère*"—her voice failed her, and the tears would not keep bounds—"still I will pray, all this day, that for the present, you may be spared to those who love you.—Eugène, good morning!" She turned quickly up the avenue, in her little brown cloak and coarse straw bonnet.

"For glory and country!" cried François, taking his friend's arm to lead him off.

"Stop one moment—I've forgotten just to ask Hortense one word"—said Eugène—and he ran after his mistress.

"Folly!" cried François,—“soft nonsense at the mo-

ment we have hard blows to think of!—you may overtake me if you can, Eugène!" he spoke in a brave, shouting tone, and disappeared from the avenue.

"I will catch you in two jumps," shouted Eugène in return. "Hortense, he continued, joining her, "there will be no one at home with you in the house to-day, except your poor sick mother and the servants."

"Well, Eugène, and what of that!—I thank you for your anxiety about me—but can I not take care of the house and servants, and of my dear mother, too, for a few hours?—Besides, Antoine" (her elder brother, and *chef de famille*) "may be home from his long journey before evening:—you know he has been many days expected."

"Well, Hortense, good-bye—you know you have not bid me good-bye yet——" (a moment's break here in the dialogue)—"and Hortense——"

"What, Eugène?" as he paused.

"This day, of all days, would not be the day to——"

He stopt short again, but Hortense knew what he meant, and went on for him.

"To receive a visit from your rich rival, Eugène! he——" she continued contemptuously, "who has the château hard-by, with a window for every day in the year in it!—you are right, my friend. If ever his company was disagreeable to me, it must be till I see you again—you and François, together, I mean.—Eugène——" she paused, in her turn, looked most wistfully into her lover's face, laid her hand on his arm, and beginning with the word "François," was about to make an important request: but she suddenly checked herself—and saying—"but no—time enough for that—for even a breath of it, —*when* I shall see you both again——" she again turned from Eugène, and he bounded down the avenue to overtake his friend.

Hortense gained the open space before the enclosed *cour* of the château. It had originally been covered with soft grass, but the constant irruptions of the poultry, pigs, horses, and cows, from the farm, which bounded it on one side at right angles with the château, left it at present little appearance of verdure, or even of uniformity or cleanliness.—We have, indeed, often been outraged in

taste and patience, in France, by observing how frequently the immediate vicinity of a respectable and comfortable house is thus littered by the similar economy of fixing the abode of the small farmer, with its almost endless appendages of stables, cow-sheds, sheep-sheds, pig-styes, &c. close within view and contact. But that is scarcely to our present purpose.

As Hortense, threading her way cautiously between beasts, brutes, and fowls of many kinds, (to speak of nothing else,) approached the farmer's thatched house, she saw his stalwart, though comely daughter, holding out a flat basket of breakfast-mess for the poultry, while she screamed an invitation to them, on their predatory wanderings far and near, in a succession of shrill and nearly diabolical cadences.

"Good day, Mademoiselle," said the maiden, interrupting her summons to the cocks and hens, the turkeys, the ducks, and their offspring of low degree—yet she bawled to her young mistress almost as loud as she had done to them,—“Good day, Mademoiselle—and may God make this day end happily for you.”

“The eggs, Madeline, for breakfast,” said Hortense distantly, for she did not like the prayer put up by Madeline, for certain reasons—“since I am abroad so early, I may as well take them home myself.”

“Ay, ay,—abroad so early, indeed,” resumed Madeline—“and too early, for any good is to come of it, I am sure.—Mademoiselle,—if Monsieur François should *fall* to-day, what is to be done?”

“Done! what do you mean, *ma fille*!” asked Hortense in real or feigned surprise.

“Oh, I have heard my father and my mother talk it over, Mademoiselle—and they say it will be quite impossible to get a substitute, this time, the drain of men is so great every-where, and the price so very high.”

“And who told *thee*, Madeline, or *thy* father or mother, either, that we—my brother and his family—are so poor as not to be able to purchase a substitute—high as the price may be?” asked Hortense, now putting Madeline at her distance, as she used the *tu-toi*—“or, suppose

Monsieur François *does* draw a bad number, who told thee he may not prefer to serve his country personally, rather than by a substitute?"

"Hélas, poor Monsieur François!"—sighed Madeline, with a knowing shake of the head.

"Girl!"—cried Hortense—"what dare you say of my brother?"

"Nothing, Mademoiselle—nothing, *sur mon honneur*—it is not I that say it——"

"Say what?"

"Nothing, indeed—nothing, Mademoiselle—only that he has often been sickly and weakly, and might not have health or strength enough for a soldier."

"Pho—the eggs, *ma fille*—and the freshest"—and Hortense soon had them in the little basket, and crossed over to the château, seemingly unconcerned and unmoved by Madeline's chatter, but really and deeply agitated by it.

She did not, however, allow any one in the house to notice her feelings, in her manner. To prepare for the old and feeble mother's descent to breakfast, she closely watched, as was her wont, the labours of the rustic servant, whose business it was to pile up the logs on the hearth in the *salle à manger*, to wheel round the immense, old-fashioned, half-decayed arm-chair, to their blaze, and sweep, and dust, and arrange, and, in a word, do her best to make the spacious apartment not have the air of being badly and poorly furnished. When, with the assistance of the same attendant, Hortense had placed her mother in her usual seat, the earnest, fond, coaxing devotion with which she induced the half-doting invalid to take her morning's meal, showed nothing of a reserved care preying upon her very heart. They spoke little together of François, or of the interests of the day connected with him—for in fact, the old woman's mind was so decayed nothing distinctly affected her.

After breakfast, Hortense left her mother to the care of a young girl, and ascended to her brother Antoine's chamber, with the professed purpose of seeing that it was in order for his expected return to his family. "I must keep myself employed, except when I kneel down

to pray," was Hortense's mental resolve. "O God grant that Antoine may come back with the money he has gone to borrow of our rich uncle—God grant it!" she continued, entering his chamber. A look around informed her that little was wanted in the arrangement of the apartment. Before she turned out of it, she could not help remarking how like her elder brother's mind and character were many of the appendages of the place, added to it by himself:—the fowling-pieces, the pistols; an antique sword once wielded by a distinguished war-like ancestor; a wolf-spear; roots of flowers, preserved on rough shelves from the frosts of winter: paper bags of seeds, hung against the wall; ponderous country-made shoes, calling to mind the manful, almost rude tread and stride of their owner, in all weathers, here and there, over the few acres which misfortune had left to the descendants of a once wealthy and powerful family. And for the private library of Antoine, his sister smiled to think how easily its volumes could be numbered; they were in fact but two: one an old tome of an old fabulous history of France; the other, a great folio quite as old, entitled *La Maison Rustique*; containing loquacious and quaint instructions how to make and keep in order gardens of various kinds, shrubberies, vineyards, pleasure-grounds; how to make all descriptions of wines, and how to brew, and how to bake within doors.

But Hortense did not smile when, by association, her mind, and with it her steps, turned to her younger brother's study, contrived next his sleeping apartment. Here, as she paused at its door, none of the indications of a rough masculine mind, like Antoine's, were visible; no weapons nor implements of country sport; no spear for the wolf, who was occasionally, though not often, to be met with in the adjacent forests;—no relic of family heroism; no arms of defence; even no symptoms of attention to the garden or the farm. Of books, indeed, there were enough, but all, whether poetical or prosaic, of a soft, or dreamy, or gentle cast; and a guitar lay on a chair beside the student's table; and landscape sketches, mostly unfinished, were pinned to the walls.

"Amiable and beloved François!" sighed Hortense, as she sat to the table—"My brother, my friend, my tutor;—you to whom I owe almost a mind, and whose goodness and gentleness have improved my heart—woman's as it is!—O my brother! my brother!—a merciful Providence grant I may be deceived in my fears for you!" She fell on her knees, and the prayers of Hortense were long and fervid.

The wind entering through a half-opened window, wafted to her side a piece of torn paper, written upon, but blotted and scratched over here and there. Its rustle disturbed her devotions; her eye fixed upon it; she knew her younger brother's hand; and the first words of it, unconsciously perused by Hortense, made her hurry, in spite of herself, through the whole. It was but a fragment of seemingly an aspiration to heaven, torn in pieces by its writer; and, doubtless, he had never meant it for any eye but his own. "But even this is like him," thought Hortense, "the want of presence of mind which, in the nervous bustle of leaving the house this morning, could make him over look an evidence so tremendous!"

Hortense could decypher only a few sentences of the paper; but she read enough to make her start to her feet from her knees in consternation, anger, and horror; enough to make her mutter, and—(so soon after her prayers)—almost imprecate; enough to make her tear the scrawl into a thousand little bits, and stamp them under her feet, as if she would annihilate them, and with them the sense of the written words within the breast of her brother. And then she rushed out of the room, her uppermost feeling being that of detestation of it, and almost of him.

But love and pity soon re-asserted themselves over her; and after them came, upon confirmation of her worst fears long indulged, intense, agonizing solicitude, and dread for her own and her family's honour as much as for her brother's. She flung herself on her knees again in her own room, and her only prayer now was, either that François might not draw a bad number that day, or else that Antoine might come back with money to purchase a substitute for him.

The step of a horse in the paved court-yard drew her to a window. It *was* Antoine come back ; but, after flying to embrace him, Hortense soon knew that half of her prayer was denied. Their rich relative would not lend him a *sous*, although the necessities of the family, accumulating for years, now seemed to threaten them with literal ruin.

After this, Hortense rested but upon one slight and tremulous hope ; to prove which vain or true, she must still wait many hours. For the rest of the day, she scarce opened her lips ; and, mostly sitting alone in her chamber, the anguish of suspense was fearful to her. Eugène's rich rival came a wooing, as he often did : she would not descend to him. He loitered in the house and in the gardens : she was inexorable.

At length the winter evening fell—the hour for the return of her brother and her lover. Hortense stole out of the house unobserved down the avenue, and so posted herself within the fences of the road near its termination, that she could observe every one who came by. And, one after the other, the groups who had passed the avenue in the morning, or the greater number of them, appeared returning to the little village, some silent, or only speaking in sad tones, others talking loud and laughing : and now and then was heard the smothered sob, or the repressed lament, of a woman or a girl. The poor *chef de famille* strode by with his only brother (the first group we have noticed in the morning) whom, after his day's labour, he had gone to meet on his way home ; and his Herculean arm encircled the lad's neck, but his head was bent to his chest, and he moaned to himself. Arriette appeared by her lover's side, weeping so determinedly, that his false spirits, the good things he said, and the better things he did, could not make her give over. But Clovis was marched home to supper between his father and mother, a delivered youth ; and it seemed, from the occasional difficulty he found in keeping the old man steady by his side, and hindering him from singing in a very loud and very cracked voice, that some good beer or *eau-de-vie*

had celebrated, in the town, or on the road, the triumph and joy of the family.

Hortense looked close as each group passed by: her brother came not. But she heard him named, now and then, in whispers, and caught disjointed words and tones which entered into her brain like adders' fangs. She could comprehend that something had already happened, disgraceful—and destroying, because so—to him, to her, to their family—to their ancient honour and name,—the idols of her worship since childhood, and now the only good left to them all. A daring determination already began to dawn in her mind. The sound of carriage-wheels diverted her and broke it up. She came upon the moonlit road. The heads of François and Eugène appeared, alternately, from the window of the vehicle, as if looking to note if their return was watched for. It was singular to see them come home in a carriage. No matter:—now, at least, she could learn what the whispers of the passing villagers had not yet told her, though they alluded to other things—namely, was François, or was he not, a conscript?

She hurried to meet the carriage. The driver knew her, and pulled up.

“*Ah, ma sœur?*” shouted François, from the window, “*je suis tombé—je suis soldat!*”

Along with the shrinking of her feelings from this announcement, her reason and understanding recoiled upon their own “foregone conclusions.” Could François greet her in so *riant* and brave a tone, if she had done him justice in her former thoughts of him?

Scarcely noticing Eugène, she tenderly and weepingly embraced her brother in the carriage, which now conveyed all up the avenue. François supposed she must be surprised that they had not returned a-foot; but, in fact, as Eugène could tell her, what with getting up so unusually early that morning, and taking a long walk fasting, and then the crowd of the place where they had assembled to draw their lots, he had been put out of sorts, and could scarce muster strength enough to get home without a carriage.

"Were you ill before or after you drew?" asked Hortense.

"Before—no, after, I think—was it, Eugène?—I forget," answered the conscript.

"After," said Eugène, solemnly and sadly.

Hortense spoke not another word, although her brother continued to talk, in a bantering and hearty voice, of the suddenness with which he must enter upon his new trade, and the full practice which the new conscripts were promised just as suddenly; and how glad he would be to acquire, by the habits of a soldier's life, sufficient hardiness of frame to keep off such absurd fits of faintness as that morning had shown him subject to.

Arrived at the château, Hortense, instead of asking Eugène in, bade him good night in so abstracted a manner that the lover thought her indifferent, and remarked that if his friend Antoine were at home he might not be treated so inhospitably.

"He is at home, Eugène," replied Hortense, (and she felt François start at her side:) "but, even for that reason, you will not ask to sit down among us to-night."

"And why not, Hortense?—has Le Chevalier been visiting here to-day?"

"I do not know—good night—*mon frère* I wait to have you hand me down:"—in fact, Hortense scarce knew or cared what she said.

"Good night, then," said Eugène, briskly, as he jumped from the carriage before François moved; and then he hastened home.

"Stop one moment, dear Hortense," resumed François in the carriage, now speaking in a low and constrained voice—"Antoine returned you say?—and with the money?"

"With not as much as would purchase a substitute for you, *mon frère*, were substitutes to be had at a franc a-piece."

Her brother sat a moment silently; but she could hear the hissings of his breath between his teeth. At last, at her repeated urging, he descended from the vehicle, and offered her his arm.

"The evening cold affects you as keenly as that of the morning did," she observed, while she leaned on him into the house.

But to her surprise, François appeared in high spirits before her brother and her at supper. She watched him close, however, and now and then noted within his eye, or upon his suddenly changing cheek, or upon his moist forehead, or in his fitful smothered sigh, that which she shuddered to interpret. She noted, too, the expression of his earnest embrace of his brother and herself at parting for the night: and her heart sank within her.

"And I will watch him still," resolved Hortense. And she did so, as closely as circumstances permitted, for hours after he retired to his chamber. François bolted himself in; but she heard his uneven steps about the apartment, his groans, his wretched weeping, his mutterings, after intervals of silence, when she imagined he had cast himself in a chair or across his bed. It must have been towards the dawn of the winter's morning that, after a long pause of inaction, during which no sounds escaped his lips, she caught these sudden words as once more he started from his chair—"Ay!—that will end it—and for that cowardice itself at last gives me courage:"—and then he walked to the door at which she was listening.

Hortense had scarce time to escape out of his view, and yet keep her eye upon him, when she saw him steal, with a faltering foot, and a haggard face, towards his brother Antoine's chamber. She followed him. The fatigued traveller had left his door open, and now slept profoundly. François, continuing his stealthy pace, approached the table where his brother had put down freshly charged, the pistols he had carried with him on his journey. Hortense waited to see no more, but noiselessly flew to act upon a strange though powerful thought which some moments before had possessed her mind. Her paralyzed mother never slept in her bed, but passed the nights in an arm-chair, well wrapped up from the cold. With a sudden acquired strength, the girl caught up the old woman, ran with her out of the chamber, placed her in her chair inside the threshold of that of François,

before he had time to re-enter it, and, standing at her back, waited for him.

The faint screams of the vaguely terrified invalid sounded on his ear, as he staggered, almost blind from agitation, along the corridor, with the pistol in one hand and his night-lamp in the other. Had his mother been dead, and had her ghost confronted him, François could not have felt more consternation than at her sight he did.

"What—what's this, Hortense!" he stammered, his distended eyes wandering to his sister.

"Your mother and I have come to ask you, François, what you are going to do with that pistol?" answered Hortense:—it was still in his hand.—"Give it me, *mon frère!*" she continued advancing to him: "give it!" she repeated, in a loud tone, as he receded, and, unconscious of the act, hid it behind his back.

"Give it!" echoed his mother, her attention roused by the force of the circumstances—"give it, son François, or I will kneel down and curse you!"—Her shrill and scarcely human voice rang through the château.

He mechanically extended his hand to Hortense: she put the pistol in her bosom.

"Now help me bear our mother to her own room, and then I will speak with you," resumed Hortense. He again obeyed her. An attendant remained with the old woman, and the brother and sister walked back to his apartment.

"I know it all, my brother," said Hortense.

"All—what?" demanded François.

"O François, François, do not ask me to give it a name!—and you know I speak not of what has just happened, but rather what it is that put the black thought into your mind!—my brother, my brother, I *do* know it all!—and, François, I could have preferred, much as I love you, to have seen you in your early grave, and to have taken my place at your side.—O, mercies! mercies! I could have preferred to have perished with you, and with all—mother, brother, and every one of our own name and blood—in utter ruin of worldly prospects—in poverty—in insulted and trampled down poverty: ay, and in the depths

of a common prison. François—all that and more—any thing lips can name, or fancy shadow out, I could have smiled at, my brother, but this—this!—O François! François!”—she wept bitterly, and wrung her hands.

With scarcely power to pronounce the poor equivocation he continued to ask what she meant.

“Oh, never!” she resumed, not attending to him—“never from generation to generation, has a woman of our house been called a wanton—and O merciful heaven! never, never, *before*, from generation to generation, has a man of our house been called a——”

“A what?” he interrupted in false vivacity.

“I was wrong,” she answered, changing her tone; I was wrong to approach so nearly giving it a name. when I said I would not: I do not want to hurt you, François.”

“Tush!” he cried, assuming a higher tone, though still a false one; I will not bear such vague insult even from you my sister; tell me, or retire this moment!—tell me what it is that no man of our family has ever *before* been called, but which you would now dare to call *me*?”

“No, no, no—I will not,” muttered Hortense.

“Hortense, *I* will call *you* rude and insolent, and false, too, *if* you do not.”

Her tears ceased,—her brow grew stern,—she rose from her seat, fixed her eyes on him; and advancing slowly, while he stepped back, said—

“Listen then—A COWARD!”

He started and shivered as if she had discharged at his head the pistol she bore in her bosom.

“Yes, wretched brother!—you *fear*, you *fear*?—your heart chills in your body!—your brain burns like fire—at thought of the lot you have drawn this day!—you would shriek like a whipt infant to face the noble dangers of a battle-field!—a score of strong men did they bind you with thongs, and urge you with base lashes, could not drag you, drag you upright, standing on your limbs, to face it! Deny not my words—try not to talk me down! So mighty is the fear at your heart, that, but

a moment ago, you would have done self-murder to escape its tortures! And what else would the act have proclaimed!—proclaimed to the world, and to men and women yet unborn, of you and of your name—your ancient, your glorious name! What would have been the comment of mankind upon you, miserable brother!—upon you, found a corpse this morning, because chance made you a soldier yesterday!”

He had been swaying from side, to side his head hanging down; now he fell without a word. His sister all her momentary passion gone, flew to him, knelt at his side, and put her arms around him. He had swooned. She started up for water, put it to his lips, and chafed his temples with it. As he recovered, he heard her plaintive and soft murmurs at his ear, asking his forgiveness, and felt her caresses.

“No, no, my brother—my beloved brother!” she continued; “’tis no fault of yours—however great, however terrible a misfortune—no fault of yours! ’tis the will of God—with, perhaps my own act. O how often I have thought so, and wept to think it my own act to provoke so dark a judgment! Yes, dear François, until the day when running up to you, of a sudden, I fired Antoine’s pistol, only charged with powder, so close to you—until that day you were a brave and reckless boy—infant almost—and then, I fear, some manful nerve or other gave way! But if ’tis even so, a change may again come over you; and till that happens, let us guard jealously the secret of our honour.”

With groans and tears, sitting on the floor, he turned his face from her, covering it with his hands.

“For the present occasion,” resumed Hortense, “something must be done.”

The action of his figure and attitude showed him more attentive.

“We must find you a substitute.”

“How?” he asked, not yet uncovering his face, though he turned anxiously towards her.

“Leave it to me to think of, my brother. True, there is no money in the house, even for our immediate and

great wants, much less for the purchase of a substitute, and the only friends we have, Eugène and his family are almost as poor as we are, and with more claims on them; yet leave it to me;—by to-morrow morning—indeed, this morning at breakfast, you shall know more. Return to your bed; I will go to my own chamber. Farewell, my brother, and only promise that you will wait patiently till breakfast, and all may yet be well.”

He gave the promise required. She left him with renewed embraces; recollecting, however, the betraying expression of his own farewell to her and Antoine the previous night, she allowed nothing particular to mark her adieus.

Our story may be ended in not many more words. Noble and strange things are true of women in France, calm English reader, particularly since the old Revolution.

Left alone, François did not obey his sister's exhortation to seek repose in bed. Her engagement to procure a substitute took absorbing possession of his soul. What did she mean to do! How, in fact, could she raise the purchase-money! Vague fears of inconvenience, perhaps of humiliation and suffering to her, crowded upon his mind; and, wrought upon by his great love for his sister, François paced the room, his kindling resolves almost verifying Hortense's half prophecy, that “a change might again come over him.”

He watched the progress of the winter morning through his windows. He descended to the breakfast-room. A note from his sister awaited him upon the table:—

“I am quite sure of obtaining a substitute, only I must be absent some days from home. When you read this. I shall be already distant from you. As you wish me to succeed, make no inquiries about me till we meet. Adieu, dear brother.—HORTENSE.”

Agitated with he knew not what terrors, François soon disobeyed the injunction of the last lines. He hastened to question the servants about Hortense's departure from the house. No one had seen her leave it. He spoke

with his brother Antoine, who rode off to make inquiries in the neighbourhood.

François himself walked to Eugène's house. The young man had just gone, galloping hard, and in no amiable humour, towards a distant point, on pretended business, and would not return for three days. François walked home again, and in the course of the day saw Antoine come back, without obtaining the slightest information of their sister.

Inquiries and searches were continued for the better part of three days, in the adjacent town as well as in the country, but without effect. Eugène appeared at the château, agitated with the news of Hortense's elopement. At first, even he could make nothing of it: but, after a moody pause, he smote his thigh, and asked François to accompany him to the house of his rich rival.

They accordingly went thither together. Eugène prophesied either that Hortense would be found under the chevalier's roof, after obtaining money from him to purchase a substitute; or, that the chevalier would be reported absent, no one knew where. Although François indignantly flouted his vile suspicions, yet the jealous lover desired him to call to mind how coldly Hortense had treated her old friend the very last evening they had all been together; and he added, that, although upon that occasion she had told him, Eugène, that she knew nothing of the chevalier's visit in the course of the day, yet he had since had good reason to think that they had spent many hours together in the garden.

Neither of Eugène's prognostics proved true. They saw the chevalier, and his assurances of total ignorance of the present fate of Hortense could not be doubted.

It was the day, and near the hour, when, according to notice received, François was to repair to the town to learn the exact time fixed for his march, as a conscript towards the frontier. Eugène accompanied his friend. In the town, having presented themselves before the proper authorities, they were told that François was now a free man, a substitute having taken his place three days before; and, it was added, that the young person, from

some pressive motive not explained, had urgently required, and eventually obtained, written permission to hasten, as soon as he wished, to the head town of the department, where all the conscripts were to assemble by a certain day.

A dreadful though true misgiving seized upon François. He asked to have the features of the substitute described to him. Eugène and he glared, thunderstruck, at each other, while his request was complied with. François, after a moment's pause, requested to know how the substitute had been dressed:—in the details given, he recognised a suit of his own clothes. The name was the last request; and then the friends mounted two good horses. The next day they gained the chief town of the department. A substitute of the name given had set out the day before, with many others freshly come in and classed together at random, to join a corps actually in the field, only a few miles beyond the near frontier. Then François and Eugène put their stout horses to their best.

It was the next morning, just after day-break, that the noise of musketry and cannon reached them on their rapid journey. A short time after, they gained from a height a view of a smart skirmish. French soldiers were in quick retreat over the plain below them.—It would be superfluous to go through all the little events which, in rapid succession, brought the brother and sister together. Enough to say, that François outstripped even Hortense's lover, when he saw her in immediate danger—brought down with a pistol-shot the whiskered and moustached Prussian whose sabre was descending on her head—and, after delivering her into Eugène's arms, stood his ground in her place, doing his work like a man and a soldier. The change *did* come over him, from that moment. He served many campaigns with honour, and returned to his family, holding some rank as an officer.

For Hortense, we repeat, kind English reader, that she yet lives in the brave country in which we now write; and more, that she wears (whenever she likes) a military decoration, presented to her soon after the facts of her lofty and yet tender heroism had become known to her Imperial Sovereign.

A TALE OF

THE WHITE BRISTOL.

THE Defiance, a Bristol stage, or, as its numerous officials along the road called it, "The White Bristol," rolled up to town at the rate of nine miles an hour, having four "insides," and fourteen "outsides,"—including a livery servant, rather smuggled, we apprehend, upon the flat of the roof, where he lay at his length, comfortably bedded on a couch of cloaks, great coats, and empty sacks.

It is known to all travellers on the tops of stages, (now a large and diversified portion of the English community, embracing every class, from the nobleman to the old-clothes-man,) that, be the load of "outsides" full or deficient, or overcharged, it invariably divides itself into three companies, each of which can hold little or no intercourse with the other, although the individuals of each may, if they like, (and they seldom do,) become good friends among themselves. The coachman and the knowing young gentleman, who, before any one else thought of the advantage, "engaged the box-seat," may be regarded as the first of these sets. Detached from their fellow-travellers, they beguile the time with confidential discussions upon "the whip," the turf, the ring, the dog that, at any odds, kills two hundred rats in a minute, or the great cricket match of "Kent against All

England ;" and, whether from their foremost place upon one of the high roads of this world, or from a sense of exclusiveness worthy of Willis's dancing-rooms, or that they dislike the considerable trouble of half-turning their heads to answer an occasional question from some one behind them, most commonly they gain their journey's end without doing much more than making one another's acquaintance. The close-packed row, occupying the front edge of the roof, from whom now and then arise those questions which, good-naturedly or satisfactorily at least, are seldom resolved, form the second company. But the most numerous party is to be found at the rear of the coach, where a second row of four slip on and off, and off and on the roof, confronting yet three more human beings, who are half caged up in semicircular iron bars, which, the morning after a journey, leave a yellow-and-green mark, and not a comfortable sensation, towards the termination of the lumbar vertebræ.

Elevated above the common sublunary level, our little tale begins, then, upon the top of the White Bristol, and among a full circle of its back outsides. With its first two sets, cut off from us by the length of the roof, or with the isolated lounge stretched along the flat of that roof, we have nothing to do ; but our chosen company—some of them at least—shall be severally presented to the reader.

In the right of the iron-railed basket-seat, which jutted beyond all other appurtenances of the manifold machine, sat a smart-dressed, smart-faced young man, who, from the certain kind of leering smile that constantly played in his large grey eyes, and round his gaping mouth, seemed to think himself much better than his circle, yet willing to be inwardly amused at their expense ; and he had a town air, and might be an emissary from some "London house" to a Bristol correspondent, now returning to his desk, after transacting his employer's business.

Next to him was a young woman, about twenty, holding on her lap a lively infant just beginning to gabble in its own occult (though for that reason not vague) language, and to kiss its little hand, and to nod its little head, and to point to novel objects, in admiration or inquiry, and, in

fact, to go through its first charming intercourse with its kind, and its first observance of the mute creation, which it had been sent here to comprehend, to use, and to enjoy.

At the left of the young woman and her fairy charge sat a man, perhaps upwards of thirty; but the rich, embrowned hue of his countenance, betokening long exposure to foreign suns and weather, would probably induce an over-calculation of his age. There was a lightness—so different from a levity—of expression in his rather handsome features, which, according to the world belonged certainly to early youth; if indeed one did not account for its attendance upon maturer years, by supposing (what his complexion hinted) that he had passed much of his previous life in the camp or on the wave, cut off from worldly mannerism, and preserving, almost untainted, one of the most bountiful gifts of a good Providence—a cheery and hearty disposition. His observers, upon the present occasion, could not decide, however, in which of the capacities alluded to he might have served his country, for he was as free of military or of naval as he was of social technicality. His plain, peaceful dress, also left curiosity at fault. Indeed, considering that the Peninsular contest still went on, and that few who had a right to exhibit warlike costume usually travelled without it, it was highly probable, after all, that he had acquired his foreign complexion without facing peril either of the flood or of the field. And the rank which, previous to his ascent to the basket of the White Bristol, he might have held in general society, further appeared doubtful. Awkward or vulgar he could not be called in anything he said or did; yet, in his way of saying or doing anything, polished he as surely was not. Perhaps he *was* polite; but, if so, it was not the politeness of a coterie, nor of a particular country—it was his own; or he had picked it up, here and there, in many countries.

Such were the three passengers who, tightly wedged together, filled the basket of the stage. The first of the four who clung to the confronting roof seemed a very young gentleman. He held his head averted from his

opposite companions of the road, looking out upon the fields or the sky: he almost turned his back upon his own row; he dangled one leg over the iron of his perch; and his colourless, thin rigid face, kept itself as imperturbed as if he had been dead, and his lips as compressed as if they had been settled after death. He, indeed, was obviously an eminent being. And inasmuch as, during the whole journey, he continued to evince his own sense of this superiority in the manner described, he shall henceforward be passed by, just as if, indeed, he had not that day sat on the White Bristol at all, but was really one of the dead-and-gone world he seemed so studious of counterfeiting amid the summer sunshine of our living one.

By his side appeared a man almost as young as he; like him, pointedly averting his eyes from his *vis-à-vis* friends in the basket, and, particularly from the young woman who held the infant; and, still like him, serious and silent as the grave. But he was only a decent-clad, respectable-looking young person; and deep-seated sorrow, or suppressed agitation, instead of stolid assumption, or well-managed superciliousness, characterised *his* taciturnity.

We need say but little of the personage who sat at his left hand. She was a middle aged, and very fat woman. She held a wicker reticule, of proportions corresponding to herself, in her hand, from under the lid of which peeped the neck of a small green bottle, often applied, with a care-fraught sigh, to her lips; and after it had been so applied she always slumbered, or only started into waking existence, shrieking faintly, and clinging to her neighbours, as her dreams vividly pictured the coach in the act of breaking down under her. And of the last passenger of our set, whom she crushed against the barred irons of the roof, we *can* say but little. Owing to the point of sight from which we observed the group, we can only avow that a spare-limbed little man *was* there, who now and then ventured an expostulating look close into the face of the unconscious heap of fat, flesh, and clothes—the noontide incubus—the day-mare that oppressed him; or timidly dared to address his opposite neighbour, the sup-

posed 'traveller to a house;' and, in both cases, had nothing for his trouble.

The first individual of our company who, long before the coach started that morning, had mounted behind, was the young woman with the infant. She came quite alone into the inn-yard at Bristol; and after standing at the wheels some time, and looking timidly and anxiously around her, was at last assisted up by an hostler. The fat woman soon followed, attended by a crowd of friends; and she and they looked bitterly disappointed when the middle seat in the basket appeared already occupied: but a place on the roof, far away from the irons at either hand, was, after much qualification with a great many soft things, deemed a tolerably good substitute. Up sprang, next, the tropical-faced young man, and flung himself into the first vacancy which caught his eye,—namely, that at the young woman's left hand; and the moment he was seated he began to chirp and talk to her charge, and to praise its beauty and its liveliness, and to ask its age; and, when he had been answered, to wonder that there could be so fine and so intelligent a creature of only just thirteen months. Shortly, he had it in his arms, and he and it were very good friends, as also, indeed, were he and its young nurse or nursery-maid, although few words or even looks of hers assured him of the fact. While the helpers put the horses to, the dapper youth, mentioned as sitting at the young woman's right hand, clambered up: the little sufferer under the stout lady then crept into his infelicitous nook—he might have chosen better, but he seemed too nervous for the effort; and the White Bristol rattled out of the inn-yard, yet wanting, among its rear-outsides, two of the party already enumerated.

But, at the corner of an outlet street, standing alone, with a bundle in his hand, soon appeared the grave or afflicted young man, who afterwards sat between the stout lady and the stupid affected young man: and now there was a succession of little incidents.

As the coach stopped to pick him up, the young woman glanced down, and immediately started, trembled, and grew pale; then she quickly turned her head, drew a shawl like an awning, over the baby, and let down 2

thick green veil over her own face. An instant after, she half rose up and looked around her, as if impulsively anxious to descend and abandon the stage; but a doleful sigh seemed to intimate that, on second thoughts, she must of necessity resign herself to her situation, however disagreeable it might prove to be; and, as her sole resource, she held her head steadily turned away from the side of the coach at which she had seen the young man standing, and up which she no doubt concluded he would climb to the top.

Evidently, the causer of her uneasiness had not yet caught a sight of her. But this was soon to happen, notwithstanding her precautions. Instead of ascending the vehicle at the side which it was natural to think he would prefer, he must have gone round to the other, for some sufficient reason; for she had scarce averted her face to that other side, when *his* closely confronted it, emerging in the space left open for gaining the roof. No one except himself could now see her look, on account of the depth and closeness of her bonnet; but excessive surprise first worked in his features: immediately came a fiery blush, and a dropping of his eye, not so intelligible; then, in his turn, he grew very pale, then wavered in his insecure position, and the White Bristol again rolling off, after Mr. Coachee's mere warning of 'hold fast'—he must have dropped under its wheels, but that his future companions grappled him by the arms and the collar, and dragged him into his seat. Even the youthful nurse, with a loud catching of breath, stretched out one of her hands, unconsciously it would seem, when she witnessed his emotion, and foresaw his danger; but the moment he was in safety, her disowning and repelling manner returned: and after many useless glances, he too assumed the grave estrangement of eye which has before been noticed. This difference there was, however, between their avoidance of one another; hers seemed prompted by dislike, or at least by anger; his, self-imposed by necessity, whatever that necessity might be.

In a short time their unknown feelings towards each other were again called into play.

The coach had proceeded some miles beyond Bristol,

When the automaton young gentleman, doomed to fill the now sole vacant place on the roof, hailed it from the avenue-gate of an elegant mansion a short distance off the road. While the White Bristol pulled up for him, and while he mounted it, our sun-burnt friend, the early admirer of the engaging infant, suddenly asked the protectress of his favourite—"Is the dear little soul asleep?"

His question revealed the baby's father at once. We have yet no name for him—but, at the sound of the words, he jerked round on his seat and fixed his eyes upon the shawl-awning, which completely hid even the shape of the child, and which, it became obvious, he had not—from his first agitation, and his averted glances afterwards—suspected, until this moment, of covering the little creature whose intimated presence now so much absorbed him.

The young woman answered 'Yes,' to her companion at her left, in a low voice, and without moving. The father had been about to speak; his lips were shaping the words, his hands were stirring at his sides; but when he caught her monosyllable, his straining and glowing eyes grew dim and watery, and his person and features became stilled—all except his under lip, and that he drew in to check its spasm. The child's nurse would not yet look in the direction where he sat: and in some time he also resumed, with a low, long sigh, the part he, perhaps, thought himself compelled to adopt from the mute dictation of her conduct.

About two hours elapsed, and all our party were silent, and indeed motionless; except that the young exclusive swung his ramrod leg over the iron of the roof, and that the young woman's sun-tanned neighbour felt her shrink, once or twice, as if to relieve herself of some bodily inconvenience; and he looked at her back to ascertain whether or no the iron of the basket chafed her: but she sat forward from it, and he only detected the left arm of the "commercial traveller" (may we be forgiven if we pertinaciously assign to this young gentleman an unworthy rank and calling?) quickly snatched home from his observation. The White Bristol stopped to change horses, and with a little cry the infant awoke. A second time the father's eyes flashed upon the shawl. The nurse par-

tially uncovered her baby, and evidently would have kept it quiet on her knee. But up it popped its face, now more rosy than ever after a refreshing sleep, and swinging round, and catching the eye of its late play-fellow, crowed in glee, held out its arms, and writhed, nay kicked, to come to him. He put his hands round it, and petitioned to have it: the young woman let it go, silently and passively—and the next instant it was clasped to its father's breast. "For the first time!" mentally remarked our friend, who, indeed, had willingly allowed his new pet to be snatched from him. And then, humming a tune, he glanced at the mother—for such he at length would have her be. Still she had not turned her head; but it was bent on her hands; and though her bonnet screened the mysteries of her emotion, he felt, from his unavoidable proximity to her, a convulsive shaking of her frame, which intimated that she wept profuse though suppressed tears.

The infant did not like its new acquaintance: his sobs, his ardent kisses and embraces, had not the charm of the chirping, the smiles, and the playful fondlings of its first patron: and it struggled, and at last cried, to get free. Obviously chagrined, he tried in vain to conciliate it, calling it twenty pretty names, and often looking towards its mother as if he hoped she would at last ask it of him. But even yet she avoided his eye: and yielding to its continued remonstrance, the father, with another heavy sigh, passed it to the arm of his opposite fellow-traveller, and quietness, if not peace, once more reigned among our circle.

The White Bristol had left the city (which has immortalised itself by rejecting, after having chosen, Edmund Burke as its parliamentary representative)—at ten o'clock; and at two, a fierce July sun played fully upon our travellers. The young woman grew faint from the heat, and, taking off her nursing-shawl, exhibited a charming figure, and a fair, delicate, taper neck. To protect the latter from being assimilated with his own complexion, her left hand neighbour put up an umbrella over her. In this situation he again felt her shrink and even start and glancing across her shoulders, saw the arm he had before noticed stealing round her waist.

"You wish the gentleman to keep his arm where it ought to be?" he asked, loud enough to be heard by the whole party.

"What arm? what gentleman?" seconded the infant's father, fiercely.

"Nothing incommodes me now, sir, thank you," she said, replying only to the first speaker. The impertinent arm had been withdrawn.

"And you would rather not be incommoded, in future?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Then I am sure the gentleman will remember,"—speaking over to him.

"He had better, or I will make him remember!" added his ally, bending a hostile glance on (still we hope he is) the commercial scout. And at last, the young woman quickly looked up into the speaker's face, plainly, though mutely, remonstrating against any quarrel on her account; and, had he as promptly responded, they would probably have been better friends for the rest of their journey. Though he must have been aware of this decision in his favour, he chose, however, to keep his eyes frowningly fixed on the object of his wrath, perhaps somewhat ostentatious of his zeal in her cause, and inclined to make the most of it while she so closely observed him: but the chidden youth, after one of his leering stares, began to study the beauties of the landscape; and all this being rapidly comprehended by the young woman, she bent her head towards her chest, and allowed her too-chivalrous champion to seek her eye, without finding it, at his own convenience.

After day-break, at about half-past two, next morning, the White Bristol, now within some fourteen miles of the metropolis, approached a spot where our brown-faced friend had told the coachman to set him down. The party, shaking off the slumber, or the stupor of the short night, engaged themselves in restoring their neglected dress to some degree of good order, suited to the inquisitiveness of 'the garish eye of day.' The stage stopt at the bottom of a hill in order that the drag might be taken off its wheel. "Coachman," said the person we would

seem inclined to be most friendly with,—“over the next hill, about a mile on, you will see a stile among some trees—put me down there; I have to walk across the fields to the village yonder.”

The young woman turned fully round, and gazed into his face.

“Yes, my little queen,” he continued, catching up the infant from her knee and kissing it,—“good-bye—nearest and dearest must part—so, good-bye. God bless you, your life long—ay, with every blessing!” (his eyes glistened)—“Look—look at yon pretty, taper, little spire, coming up over the green trees like a lady—that’s my land-mark—and tis many a long year since I saw it last—look! is it not a pretty thing?”

The infant crowed, and jumped on his lap, and looked and pointed as he looked and pointed, just as if it understood him, or even could discern an object at such a distance.

“Ay, indeed is it;—do you know, fairy, I have seen none half as pretty ever since I parted with it, though I’ve seen a good many?”

The child looked down upon the road, and directed his attention to another object. This was a man who sat on a stone by the road-side, his knees widely parted, his elbows resting on them, and his head drooping forward so as to hide his features. A small bundle, having a stick thrust through its knot, lay beside him. Had he appeared standing, his stature must have approached the gigantic, although his limbs were gaunt and spare. He wore a low-crowned, narrow-brimmed glazed hat, much battered and bruised; coarse linen trowsers, tarred, rent and patched; a bluish shirt-frock, also of some linen or cotton quality, and also soiled, and torn, and here and there clumsily patched: the collar of his check shirt was open; and his bare brown, bony ankles appeared above very old shoes. He seemed exceedingly weary, perhaps after walking all night, for the dust of the road covered him from head to foot; or if he had slept since the sun went down, it might have been in some field by the road, as was intimated by the blades of new hay which adhered to different parts of his person.

"So tired, brother?" asked the infant's friend. The way-worn, or else dogged man, made no answer; and at that instant the White Bristol, freed of its drag, resumed its speed, cutting short farther efforts to draw him into conversation. But the querist noted, that, as the coach whisked by, he arose from the stone, took up his stick and bundle, and seemed to turn his face in the direction opposite to its course.

Shortly after, the infant's mother a third time started more vehemently than she had done before. The two champions, looking at her former persecutor, seemed strongly disposed to be angry, but she interrupted them, saying, in great alarm—"No—no—here, behind!"—and looking over the back of her seat, she now screamed at the vision of a great bony hand,—from which tar, and other stains, had been but half washed off,—perhaps worn off—that appeared grasping the iron rail of the basket close at her elbow: and a louder scream escaped her, when, in reply to her first, a man's face—wasted, though youthful, pale, or rather dingy-yellow, though weather-beaten, clouded in coal-black hair that hung, like ropes down the cheeks, and surmounted by the old glazed hat just seen upon the road-side,—turned upward, and at only the distance of two or three feet, glared its large black eyes into hers. It was, indeed, the tired pedestrian, who, standing upon a trunk that had been swung in chains at the back of the coach, underneath, supported himself by holding the basket-rail with one hand, and some lower stay with the other; thus hoping unnoticed by coachman or passengers, to get himself conveyed a mile or two on his journey.

The infant echoed its mother's scream; and our party were thrown into some confusion.

"You had better get down, friend," said the sun-burnt traveller. His former seconder more violently interfered. The owner of the raw-boned, gigantic hand took no notice.

"It seems captious to insist with you," resumed the first peace-maker; "and only that you frighten the young woman and the child, we would not do so—but come—you really must leave us more to ourselves."

Still the pertinacious hand showed no sign of relaxing its gristly gripe, and still no answer was vouchsafed.

"Strike him to the road!"—cried the infant's father.

"Hush, Tom, hush!" said the young woman, in a low voice, half kind, half commanding.

"Stop"—resumed her less boisterous champion, as Tom (thanks for his name, at last) started up as if to carry into effect his own advice—"stop—coachman!—rid us of a fellow who has got up behind, here."

"Take off his castor, sir, and show it the road—we finds that always fits them rum uns, best," answered Coachee, lashing his horses.

"And a very good way I believe it is—so I'll try it."

Stooping over the seat, he accordingly took off the intruder's hat, and let it fall on the road. What followed was not to have been expected. The man's face had been turned downward; now he again turned it up, and darted at our friend a very extraordinary look—or rather a succession of looks. The first was hasty, blighting rage; the next—while his gaunt fist worked on the iron—was wild revenge; then he snatched away his hand—it was the right—and clinging to the coach only by the other, allowed his body to swing back, and it and its arm to knit into full strength for a destroying blow:—a second after, either recollecting that his foe was beyond his reach, or that his own precarious position did not admit of success in his attempt, his features and attitude changed into a baleful expression of resolved future vengeance;—his eye flared less, but it burned deeper; his high-boned sunken cheeks grew horribly colourless; his blue lips parted, showing his set teeth; his shoulders fell, and his back-drawn arm and hand dropped at his side.—Some of the spectators laughed, doubtless at the absurdity of such extravagant and impotent anger from such a mean person, and for a provocation so slight, and indeed merited; but the spectator most concerned did not laugh. He thrilled, as their eyes communed together, if not with alarm, certainly with astonishment; nay, with interest, too; and finally with admiration. He had often seen the human countenance worked with human passion; but the intense animal ferocity of that youthful, wasted, and yet finely

featured face ;—its distinctness ; the deadly frown of those shaggy eyebrows over those beautiful, distorted, devouring eyes ;—the mental character that heightened, ennobled the whole—he called it in his own mind, wonderful and magnificent.

And the tone in which the man at last got out words to syllable his enormous passion, well suited the previous eloquence of his countenance ; it mastered the noise of the clattering, grinding coach, and the tramping horses, and yet it was not shrill.

“ Rascal !” he said—“ coward ! dog !—I have marked you, till we meet again !—You could not know that in insulting me, you outraged a man above his present appearance—but you saw me—you saw me ragged, jaded, hungry, and yet a man—and when I would only give my blistered feet a little rest—taking me at a cowardly disadvantage—in every way cowardly—you—you—but no matter !—I shall know you another time !—I have looked well at you—ay—marked you, I say, for that other time !—Think of me till it comes !”—and he recklessly let go his hold of the coach, and was flung by its motion prostrate upon the road.

“ Strange, very strange !” mused our friend, his feelings divided between the ludicrous of the scene,—so swelling a result from such a silly cause—and sympathy with the hidden character, the perhaps trampled heart, if not shattered mind, he had roused into morbid fury. Then he recollected that the language addressed to him could not have come from a vulgar man : and here his own heart smote him, and he anxiously looked back, grieving for the poor fellow’s fall. But the coach had gained, and was descending, at the opposite side, the second hill pointed out by himself to the coachman, and the wayfarer could not be seen.—“ Poor wretch ! perhaps I have, indeed, treated with indignity, a spirit not created for its present situation.”

His reverie was interrupted by the coach stopping ‘at the stile among the trees.’ He snatched a parting kiss from the baby, wished its mother many blessings, bowed to his other fellow-travellers, got down, and vaulted over the stile. It had been arranged that his luggage should go on to the next town.

In a few moments he only saw the broad, well-beaten path he had trod so often in childhood, sweeping before him, through meadows of new hay, down to the unbraced hollow, in which rose his beloved spire. "'Tis still the same," he said—"the very smell of the new-mown hay, and all; see—the stepping-stones over this little bourne—one, two, three—the identical ones, only a little worn—an I very little, either—not half as much as I am—ay! the mute, inert things remain the same, while our generations pass away."

On he bounded; the stile which he had just crossed having now sunk below the steep, though pleasant, declivity, he was descending. The spire, too, seemed to subside gradually into its rich trees, as he first gained a level with it, and then walked over ground lower than that upon which it was based. But its top, still seen, grew more distinct—with its old, well known features, its weather-slating, its ventilation apertures—its very minute differences of colour: and houses of the little clustering village it commanded also began to peep out, here and there, through their embowering foliage.

Tears started to his eyes. He quickened his already quick pace, and hummed an old song of boyhood to divert them back again. A wild shout reached him. He turned; and along a narrow path, meeting him at an angle, raced the wayfarer.

Our friend now felt some real alarm, but only such as a brave man experiences at the prospect of unnatural contest with a maniac, for such he deemed this frantic person to be. It was a very early hour, scarce past three o'clock in the morning: the place was lonely, too: and the humble inhabitants of the village were beyond hail, even if any of them had yet left their beds. He was unarmed, and though muscular and active, as well as thoroughly brave, doubted the result of a struggle with the excited strength of the gaunt giant who sought to cope with him. Not altering his pace, he again looked behind. His enemy was twice as far from him as he was from the village. He would walk quick r, and perhaps gain the neighbourhood of human being, before they could come in contact. It had occurred to his mind to imitate his pursuer, and

run ; but, whatever, might be the consequences his spirit disdainfully rejected the idea.

"Stop!"—he heard ejaculated at a distance behind him—"stop and face me! Coward!"—(when he paid no attention to this command)—"you fear to stop!—you have insulted me, and you fear me!" At these words he did stop, however, and turned round ; and then walked coolly to meet his challenger.

The furious man ran forward at great speed ; but he often staggered, as if his strength was failing him ; and his broken delivery—for still he spoke—also denoted exhaustion.

"You thought the time I warned you of was not so near at hand—thought, perhaps, that I used idle threats, and that it would never come—but you mistook! And though *now—now*—it *does* come sooner than I myself hoped—be sure I would have tracked you, mile by mile, day by day—ay, till I fell dead on the road between us, or it *should* have come!—Satisfaction for your insult!"—he continued, now ending his wild race a few yards from his foe. "Many outrages I have been obliged to bear, but this I will not!—You ought to have pistols about you—or else near you. Give me one and take another!"

"I have no such things about me or near me—you are mad to talk such nonsense," he was answered.

"Liar!—I should be—I wish I was—mad ; but I am not ! and you scoff me, because in these rags I demand satisfaction for your ignominious insult!—Come, you have something like *this*, at least : hold it in your hand, then!"—he drew forth a large pocket-knife.

"Stand off, fellow!—I carry no such weapons ; nor will I enter into conflict with a maniac. Stand off, I say, at your peril. You vile murderer—you assassin!—would you thus attack an unarmed traveller with a butcherly knife!"—

"No!" replied the assailant, "I am no cowardly assassin—there goes my weapon"—flinging it far over the hedge. "And now I meet you on equal terms—and it is to grapple for life, villain!"

With these words he rushed furiously upon him. But,

avoiding his perilous grasp, our friend sprang aside; and clenching his fist, and coolly summoning his strength, he felled him on the grass—where he lay, overcome by exhaustion, as much as stunned by the blow, although it was, indeed, a good one.

The victor, pity and interest still his predominant feelings, resolved to send some friendly aid to the vanquished, and pursued his way to the village. Entering its narrow and straggling street, he found greater changes in objects framed by man's hands than he had seen in the features of nature along his meadow path. In one place appeared a new house, where he had expected the familiar face of an old one; in another arose a human dwelling, where, sixteen years ago, the period of his absence from home, bushes had been growing; and on many of the little sign-boards above the humble village shops new names were substituted for those to which his boyish eye had been familiar.

His heart fell, as, now glancing around, now musing, he walked slowly forward. The echoing of his solitary footsteps through the slumbering village, heightened the sadness of his mood into a feeling of desolation. "I have thought of it by day, and dreamt of it by night, and it is not *old home* to me after all," he said.

Yielding to a heavy foreboding, he now almost feared to place himself before the one, well-remembered house, which he had travelled far to enter. He leaned on the swinging stile of the church-yard, that stood between him and it (and how emphatically between him and it he thrilled to think) and gazed up at the old church steeple. A sudden fancy took him, which he evasively expressed to his own mind—"I will turn in here, and read the headstones to see how many old friends are gone." And on the headstones he found, indeed, most of the names he had missed from the sign-boards. But, at a very humble one he stopped and trembled. It was not higher than his knee, and only bore the inscription—"M. H. 1809, aged 56." They were, however, the initials of his mother's name—and such might be her age, too, four years previously, that is, in 1809. Now he ran out of the church-yard towards the once decent cottage in which that good

mother had—(until he last kissed her, and left her to brave the world for their common advantage)—been the tutor of his heart and mind. It was a roofless ruin. He leaned his arm and head against its door-jamb and wept loudly.

A noise in the street aroused him, and, looking up, he saw a little lame old man wheeling a wheel-barrow, in which were a shovel and a broom. At a glance he recognised 'Old Master Martin,' who, as long as he could remember, used to rise every morning, hours before any one else in the village, to scrape the streets, that he might sell the produce—and live; and he alone, this decrepid, age-stricken, solitary being, the despised of his own humble community—he, alone, seemed, to the eye of our friend, unchanged in feature, nay, in garb, after the wear and tear of sixteen years. He resolved to speak with Martin; for still he cherished a doubt of the headstone.

The old man had rested his wheel-barrow, and now stood leaning on his broom-handle, attentively eyeing the stranger. They exchanged salutations, and entered into conversation. Recollecting the names he had seen in the church-yard, the traveller—thus introducing his real topic—severally inquired after the persons whom they had once designated, and got an account of their several deaths, and the manner of their deaths. "There was a widow of the name of Martha Hall, too," continued the querist.

"And so there *was*," replied old Martin, dropping his chin on his breast;—our friend's doubt subsided;—"and *her* removal happened just four years ago, come harvest, and it come about by reason of the first letter she had from her son Dick as went after her eldest son to the Hindoes, while her daughter Jane was in service in Lon'on, and old Martha herself in the work'se."

"The workhouse?—and her little girl in service?—how could that be? I have reason to know that her son George regularly sent her remittances, proportioned to his pay, from the time he enlisted as a private soldier till he rose to be adjutant to his regiment; and his very last remittance was considerable, though the former ones were slight."

"And *we* know that, too," said Master Martin; "but

we know, moreover, that the last money didn't come to hand as soon as it ought to have come; nor till after Dick Hall went to seek his fortune—(a bad one it turned up for him;) nor till after little Jane went to Lon'on, and her mother on the parish, and then to the church-yard, just because it didn't."

"And Richard Hall followed his brother to India—more than four years ago, as it appears! And how was his fortune so bad?"

"Why, instead of letting him work his passage out to the Hindees after brother George,—(that he loved dearly, though he couldn't be said to know him, as why, Dick was only in his fourth when George left us, and the girl only in her second)—they pressed him for a man-o'-war's-man, down on the coast; and took him round the world to fight the French, just wherever they liked; ay, and gave him the rope's-end, I believe, when he wouldn't take to the tar, at the first sitting off."

"Good God! bad fortune, indeed, for a lad who had and has a friend willing and able to help him to a better! His brother often wrote to have his education attended to; and at twenty he must have been a clever boy."

"The cleverest among us; and the chap had the spirit of a lord; may be his fault lay on that side: and there came another letter from him t'other day, for his mother, like the first; but as she, poor old soul, was removed, his uncle Luckhurst opened it, and he said he had just got his discharge at last, and that he would start after it, not waiting for a shilling to help him on the road, to see her and Jane."

"Is Jane Hall still in London?"

"No; poor wench! she has had her own troubles: married a London husband, two years ago—a good tradesman, but a wild'un;—he broke, and ran away from her; and she came down to us, to have her baby; and then she took it with her to Bristol, where she'd got a new place: but we are soon to see her again: her uncle says to-morrow, or next day, if not to-day."

George Hall had reverted, with certain misgivings, to more than one of his late acquaintances of the road, during the narrative of the old chronicler. Now his heart swelled with emotion, as he saw, coming down the street, three

of those acquaintances. They were the young woman and her child, and the serious young man to whom, during the journey, she would not speak. At present, however, she leaned on his arm, and he carried her infant. They must have descended from the White Bristol immediately after George Hall, although his bounding speed did not at first allow him to take notice, and the falling ground he traversed soon after, caused him to lose sight of 'the stile among the trees.' Perhaps, too—(indeed it afterwards appeared to be the case)—they had tarried some time, just inside the stile, to go through the explanations which, notwithstanding the young woman's determined coldness on the road, ultimately produced the good understanding that seemed re-established between them.

The young woman's eyes met those of George Hall, the moment she appeared in the street; and the interest with which they continued to regard each other was probably of a similar kind. She passed him, and proceeded to the door of a house well known to him as his uncle Luckhurst's;—this was the presumptive proof he wanted; and before she could knock, her brother had made himself known to her.

After their first embrace, and his renewed caresses of his infant favourite, and his salutation of her husband—(whom Jane whispered was very contrite and quite a changed man, and had been lately an industrious one, and now brought home proofs of the fact to his wife and child)—George Hall led his sister over the crumbling threshold of their former home—seated her on the ruins of a partition wall, which had once bounded their little parlour, and there heard her repetition of old Master Martin's stories. Jane touched lightly on her own sorrows; but wept much while she recounted those of her mother; and even more while she reverted to their brother Richard, whom she endowed with mental and bodily merits, even beyond old Martin's eulogy. At twenty, when he left the village, Richard was the handsomest, tallest, best-hearted, best-learned lad in the whole parish; somewhat too high in his notions, perhaps; but not so, after all, considering the high expectations his brother George had allowed him to form, and the gentleman's education he had sent means

to afford him, and for which Richard loved George more than for any other proof of affection. "But God knows how hard usage, and great cruelty—too much even for the meanest spirit to bear—may have changed his nature," continued Jane; "and, indeed, in the last letter he sent home, and that uncle, Luckhurst sent to me, there is a bitterness, and a sad, sad carelessness of mind, that makes me fear for him."

Their melancholy conversation continued; and George, holding his sister's hand, caused her to rest her head upon his shoulder, while she wept. In this situation they suddenly heard some one jump in through a window-hole at their backs, and come crashing among the rubbish;—and before George Hall could stand on his guard, he was overpowered and dragged to the ground, and the revengeful wayfarer held his distorted face close to our friend's keeping him down by the throat, and bending over him, while, amid Jane's shrieks, he cried out, "Soh!—here I find you, miscreant,—*here!* and by this woman's side!—Jane!" he continued almost shrieking, as he turned to her, "I knew you this morning at one glance, though at one glance, you could not know me; but I would not ask you to recollect me, because my rags must have shamed you; and perhaps for another reason—perhaps to watch your conduct with this bully of yours—this scoffing, sneering, braggart, who, for *your* smiles—for *your* ruin!"—he bent lower over our prostrate friend, and griped him closer—"for your ruin—for my eternal shame—and for his own destruction—dared to insult your brother!"

Jane redoubled her screams, and clapped her hands, crying, "Richard! Richard!—stop! stop!" Her frenzy did not allow her to say more; but George Hall shook off the the young man's gripe with a great effort, and jumped to his feet, as he said, "Yes, Richard, stop! for I, too, am Jane's brother."

Some months following, on the spot where this happened, the two brothers, their sister, her child, and her husband made a happy family party, at a 'housewarming dinner,' given by George Hall, after he had built a commodious and handsome house upon the site of the old cottage; and his youngest acquaintance of 'The White Bristol sat on his knee.'

THE STOLEN SHEEP.

THE faults of the lower orders of the Irish are sufficiently well known : perhaps their virtues have not been proportionately observed, or recorded for observation. At all events, it is but justice to them, and it cannot conflict with any established policy, or do any one harm, to exhibit them in a favourable light to their British fellow-subjects, as often as strict truth will permit. In this view the following story is written—the following facts, indeed ; for we have a newspaper report before us, which shall be very slightly departed from, while we make our copy of it.

The Irish plague, called typhus fever, raged in its terrors. In almost every third cabin there was a corpse daily. In every one, without an exception, there was what had made the corpse—hunger. It need not be added that there was poverty too. The poor could not bury their dead. From mixed motives of self-protection, terror, and benevolence, those in easier circumstances exerted themselves to administer relief, in different ways. Money was subscribed—(then came England's munificent donation—God prosper her for it !)—wholesome food, or food as wholesome as a bad season permitted, was provided ; and men of respectability, bracing their minds to

avert the danger that threatened themselves, by boldly facing it, entered the infected house, where death reigned almost alone, and took measures to cleanse and purify the close cribbed air, and the rough, bare walls. Before proceeding to our story, let us be permitted to mention some general marks of Irish virtue, which, under those circumstances, we personally noticed. In poverty, in abject misery, and at a short and fearful notice, the poor man died like a Christian. He gave vent to none of the poor man's complaints or invectives against the rich man who had neglected him, or who, he might have supposed, had done so, till it was too late. Except for a glance,—and, doubtless, a little inward pang while he glanced—at the starving and perhaps infected wife, or child, or old parent as helpless as the child,—he blessed God, and died. The appearance of a comforter at his wretched bed-side, even when he knew comfort to be useless, made his heart grateful and his spasmed lips eloquent in thanks. In cases of indescribable misery—some members of his family lying lifeless before his eyes, or else some dying,—stretched upon damp and unclean straw, on an earthen floor, without cordial for his lips, or potatoes to point out to a crying infant,—often we have heard him whisper to himself (and to Another who heard him!) “The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” Such men need not always make bad neighbours.

In the early progress of the fever, before the more affluent roused themselves to avert its career, we cross the threshold of an individual peasant. His young wife lies dead; his second child is dying at her side; he has just sunk into a corner himself, under the first stun of disease, long resisted. The only persons of his family who have escaped contagion, and are likely to escape it, are his old father, who sits weeping feebly upon the hob, and his first-born, a boy of three or four years, who, standing between the old man's knees, cries also—for food.

We visit the young peasant's abode some time after. He has not sunk under ‘the sickness,’ he is fast regaining his strength, even without proper nourishment: he

can creep out of doors, and sit in the sun. But in the expression of his sallow and emaciated face, there is no joy for his escape from the grave, as he sits there alone, silent and brooding. His father, and his surviving child, are still hungry—more hungry, indeed, and more helpless than ever; for the neighbours who had relieved the family with a potatoe and a mug of sour milk, are now stricken down themselves, and want assistance to a much greater extent than they can give it.

"I wish Mr. Evans was in the place," cogitated Michaul Carroll; "a body could spake forn'ent him, and not spake for nothin', for all that he's an Englishman; and I don't like the thoughts o' goin' up to the house to the steward's face—it wouldn't turn kind to a body. May be he'd soon come home to us, the masther himself."

Another fortnight elapsed. Michaul's hope proved vain. Mr. Evans was still in London; though a regular resident on his small Irish estate, since it had come into his possession, business unfortunately—and he would have said so himself—now kept him an unusually long time absent. Thus disappointed, Michaul overcame his repugnance to appear before the 'hard' steward. He only asked for work, however. There was none to be had. He turned his slow and still feeble foot into the adjacent town. It was market-day, and he took up his place among a crowd of other claimants for agricultural employment, shouldering a spade, as did each of his companions. Many farmers came to the well-known 'stannin,' and hired men at his right and at his left, but no one addressed Michaul. Once or twice, indeed, touched perhaps by his sidelong looks of beseeching misery, a farmer stopt a moment before him, and glanced over his figure; but his worn and almost shaking limbs giving little promise of present vigour in the working field, worldly prudence soon conquered the humane feeling which started up towards him in the man's heart, and with a choking in his throat, poor Michaul saw the arbiter of his fate pass on.

He walked homeward, without having broken his fast that day. "Bud, *musha*, what's the harm o' that," he said to himself; "only here's the ould father, an *her* pet

boy, the weenock, without a pyatee either. Well *asthore*, if they can't have the pyatees, they must have better food—that's all;—ay—" he muttered, clenching his hands at his sides, and imprecating fearfully in Irish—"an' so they must."

He left his house again, and walked a good way to beg a few potatoes. He did not come back quite empty-handed. His father and his child had a meal. He ate but a few himself; and when he was about to lie down in his corner for the night, he said to the old man, across the room—"Don't be a-crying to-night, father—you and the child there; but sleep well, and ye'll have the good break'-ast afore ye in the mornin'."

"The good break'ast *ma-bauchal*!* a-then, an' where 'ill id come from?"

"A body promised it to me, father."

"*Arich*? Michaul, an' sure is't fun you're making of us, now, at any rate. Bud the good night, *a chorra*,† an' my blessin' on your head, Michaul; an' if we keep trust in the good God, an' ax his blessin' too, mornin' an' evenin' gettin' up an' lyin' down, He'll be a friend to us at last: that was always an' ever my word to you, poor boy, since you was the years o' your own weenock, now fast asleep at my side; an' it's my word to you, now, *ma-bouchal*; an' you won't forget id; and there's one sayin' the same to you, out o' heaven, this night—herself, an' her little angel-in-glory by the hand, Michaul *a-vourneen*."

Having thus spoken in the fervent and rather exaggerated, though every-day, words of pious allusion of the Irish poor man, old Carroll soon dropt asleep, with his arms round his little grandson, both overcome by an unusually abundant meal. In the middle of the night he was awakened by a stealthy noise. Without moving, he cast his eyes round the cabin. A small window, through which the moon broke brilliantly, was open. He called to his son, but received no answer. He called again and again: all remained silent. He arose and crept to the corner where Michaul had lain down. It was empty. He looked out through the window into the moonlight.

* My boy.

† Term of endearment.

The figure of a man appeared at a distance, just about to enter a pasture-field belonging to Mr. Evans.

The old man leaned his back against the wall of the cabin, trembling with sudden and terrible misgivings. With him the language of virtue, which we have heard him utter, was not cant. In early prosperity, in subsequent misfortunes, and in his late and present excess of wretchedness, he had never swerved in practice from the spirit of his own exhortations to honesty before men, and love for, and dependance upon God, which, as he has truly said, he had constantly addressed to his son, since his earliest childhood. And hitherto that son had, indeed, walked by his precepts, farther assisted by a regular observance of the duties of his religion. Was he now about to turn into another path? to bring shame on his father in his old age? to put a stain on their family and their name, "the name that a rogue or a bould woman never bore?" continued old Carroll, indulging in some of the pride and egotism for which an Irish peasant is, under his circumstances, remarkable. And then came the thought of the personal peril incurred by Michaul; and his agitation, incurred by the feebleness of age, nearly overpowered him.

He was sitting on the floor, shivering like one in an ague-fit, when he heard steps outside the house. He listened, and they ceased: but the familiar noise of an old barn door cracking on its crazy hinges, came on his ear. It was now day-dawn. He dressed himself; stole out, cautiously; peeped into the barn, through a chink of the door, and all he had feared met full confirmation. There, indeed, sat Michaul, busily and earnestly engaged, with a frowning brow and a haggard face, in quartering the animal he had stolen from Mr. Evans's field.

The sight sickened the father,—the blood on his son's hands, and all. He was barely able to keep himself from falling. A fear, if not a dislike, of the unhappy culprit also came upon him. His unconscious impulse was to re-enter their cabin unperceived, without speaking a word; he succeeded in doing so; and then he fastened the door again, and undressed, and resumed his place beside his innocent little grandson.

About an hour after, Michaul came in cautiously through the still open window, and also undressed and reclined on his straw, after glancing towards his father's bed, who pretended to be asleep. At the usual time for arising, old Carroll saw him suddenly jump up, and prepare to go abroad. He spoke to him, leaning on his elbow.

"And what *bolle** is on you now, *ma-bauchal*?"

"Going for the good breakfast I promised you, father dear."

"An' who's the good Christin 'll give id to us, Michaul?"

"Oh, you'll know that, soon, father: now, a good bye:"—he hurried to the door.

"A good-bye then, Michaul: bud, tell me what's that on your hand?"

"No—nothin'," stammered Michaul, changing colour, as he hastily examined the hand himself; "nothin' is on id: what could there be?" (nor was there, for he had very carefully removed all evidence of guilt from his person; and the father's question was asked upon grounds distinct from anything he then saw.)

"Well, *avich*, an' sure I didn't say anything was on it wrong; or anything to make you look so quare, an' spake so strange to your father, this mornin—only I'll ax you, Michaul, over agin, who has took such a sudd'n likin' to us, to send us the good break'ast?—an' answer me sthraight, Michaul—what is id to be, that you call it so *good*?"

"The good mate, father;"—he was again passing the threshold.

"Stop!" cried his father, "stop, an' turn forn'ent me. Mate!—the good mate!—What ud' bring mate into our poor house, Michaul! Tell me, I bid you again an' again, who is to give id' to you?"

"Why, as I said afore, father, a body that——"

"A body that thieved id, Michaul Carroll?" added the old man, as his son hesitated, walking close up to the culprit; "a body that thieved id, an' no other body."

* What are you about?

Don't think to blind me, Michaul. I am ould, to be sure ; but sense enough is left in me to look round among the neighbours, in my own mind, an' know that none of 'em that has the will, has the power to send us the mate for our break'ast, in an honest way. An' I don't say, outright, that you had the same thought wid me, when you consented to take it from a thief—I don't mean to say that you'd go to turn a thief's receiver, at this hour o' your life, an' afther growin' up from a boy to a man widout bringin' a spot o' shame on yourself, or on your weenock, or on one of us. No ; I won't say that. Your heart was scalded, Michaul, an' your mind was darkened, for a start ; an' the thought o' getting comfort for the ould father, an' for the little son, made you consent in a hurry, widout lookin' well afore you, or widout lookin' up to your good God."

"Father, father, let me alone ! don't spake them words to me," interrupted Michaul, sitting on a stool, and spreading his large and hard hands over his face.

"Well, thin, an' I won't, *avich* : I won't ;—nothin, to trouble you, sure : I didn't mean id ;—only this, *a-vourneen* , don't bring a mouthful o' the bad, unlucky victuals into this cabin ; the pyaties, the wild berries o' the bush, the wild roots o' the arth, will be sweeter to us, Michaul ; the hunger itself will be sweeter ; an' when we give God thanks afther our poor meal, or afther no meal at all, our hearts will be lighter, and our hopes for to-morrow sthronger, *avich-ma-chree*, than if we faisted on the fat o' the land, but couldn't ax a blessin' on our faist."

"Well' thin, I won't either, father ; I won't :—an' sure you have your way now. I'll only go out a little while from you—to beg ; or else' as you say, to root down in the ground, with my nails, like a baste-brute, for our break'ast."

"My vourneen you are, Michaul, an' my blissin' on your head ; yes, to be sure, *avich*, beg, an' I'll beg wid you—sorrow a shame is in that :—No ; but a good deed, Michaul, when it's done to keep us honest. So come ; we'll go among the Christhins together. Only, before we go, Michaul, my own dear son, tell me—tell one thing."

"What, father ?" Michaul began to suspect.

"Never be afraid to tell me, Michaul Carroll, *ma baw-cha!* I won't—I can't be angry wid you now. You are sorry: an' your Father in heaven forgives you, and so do I. But you know, *avich*, there would be danger in quitting the place widout hiding well every scrap of anything that could tell on us."

"Tell on us! What can tell on us?" demanded Michaul; "what's in the place to tell on us?"

"Nothin' in the cabin, I know, Michaul; but——"

"But what, father?"

"Have you left nothing in the way, out there?" whispered the old man, pointing towards the barn.

"Out there! Where! What! What do you mean at all, now, father? Sure you know it's your ownself has kep me from as much as laying a hand on it."

"Ay, to day-mornin';—bud you laid a hand on it last night, *avich*, an' so——"

"*Curp-an-duoul!*" imprecated Michaul—"this is too bad, at any rate; no, I didn't—last night, or any other night—let me alone, I bid you, father."

"Come back again, Michaul," commanded old Carroll, as the son once more hurried to the door; and his words were instantly obeyed. Michaul, after a glance abroad, and a start, which the old man did not notice, paced to the middle of the floor, hanging his head, and saying in a low voice—"Hushth, now, father—it's time;"

"No, Michaul, I will not hushth; an' it is not time, come out with me to the barn."

"Hushth!" repeated Michaul, whispering sharply: he had glanced sideways to the square patch of strong morning sun-light on the ground of the cabin, defined there by the shape of the open door, and saw it intruded upon by the shadow of a man's bust leaning forward in an earnest posture.

"Is id in your mind to go back into your sin, Michaul, an' tell me you were not in the barn, at day-break, the mornin'?" asked his father, still unconscious of a reason for silence.

"Arrah, hushth, ould man!" Michaul made a hasty sign towards the door, but was disregarded.

"I saw you in id," pursued old Carroll, sternly: "ay, and at your work in id, too."

"What's that you're saying', ould Peery Carroll?" demanded a well-known voice.

"Enough—to hang his son," whispered Michaul to his father, as Mr. Evan's land-steward, followed by his herdsman and two policemen, entered the cabin. In a few minutes afterwards, the policemen had in charge the dismembered carcass of the sheep, dug up out of the floor of the barn, and were escorting Michaul, handcuffed, to the county gaol, in the vicinity of the next town. They could find no trace of the animal's skin, though they sought attentively for it; and this seemed to disappoint them and the steward a good deal.

From the moment that they entered the cabin, till their departure, old Carroll did not speak a word. Without knowing it, as it seemed, he sat down on his straw bed, and remained staring stupidly around him, or at one or another of his visitors. When Michaul was about to leave the wretched abode, he paced quickly towards his father, and holding out his ironed hands, and turning his cheek for a kiss, said, smiling miserably—"God be wid you, father dear." Still the old man was silent, and the prisoner and all his attendants passed out on the road. But it was then the agony of old Carroll assumed a distinctness. Uttering a fearful cry, he snatched up his still sleeping little grandson, ran with the boy in his arms till he overtook Michaul; and, kneeling down before him in the dust, said—"I ax pardon o' you, *avich*—won't you tell me I have id afore you go! an' here, I've brought little Peery for you to kiss; you forgot *him*, *a-courneen*.

"No, father, I didn't," answered Michaul, as he stooped to kiss the child; an' get up, father, get up; my hands are not my own, or I wouldn't let you do that afore your son. Get up, there's nothin' for you to trouble yourself about, that is, I mean, I have nothing to forgive you: no, but everything to be thankful for, an' to love you fer; you were always an' ever the good father to me; an'——" The many strong and bitter feelings which till now he had almost perfectly kept in, found full vent, and poor Michaul could not go on. The parting from his father, however, so different from what it had promised to be;

comforted him. The old man held him in his arms, and wept on his neck. They were separated with difficulty.

Peery Carrol, sitting on the road-side after he lost sight of the prisoner, and holding his screaming grandson on his knees, thought the cup of his trials was full. By his imprudence he had fixed the proof of guilt on his own child; that reflection was enough for him, and he could indulge it only generally. But he was yet to conceive exactly in what a dilemma he had involved himself as well as Michaul. The policemen came back to compel his appearance before the magistrate; and when the little child had been disposed of in a neighbouring cabin, he understood, to his consternation and horror, that he was to be the chief witness against the sheep-stealer. Mr. Evan's steward knew well the meaning of the words he had overheard him say in the cabin, and that if compelled to swear all he was aware of, no doubt would exist of the criminality of Michaul in the eyes of a jury. "'Tis a s'trange thing to ax a father to do," muttered Peery, more than once, as he proceeded to the magistrates; "it's a very s'trange thing."

The magistrate proved to be a humane man. Notwithstanding the zeal of the steward and the policemen, he committed Michaul for trial, without continuing to press the hesitating and bewildered old Peery into any detailed evidence; his nature seemed to rise against the task, and he said to the steward—"I have enough of facts for making out a committal; if you think the father will be necessary on the trial, subpœna him."

The steward objected that Peery would abscond, and demanded to have him bound over to prosecute, on two sureties, solvent and respectable. The magistrate assented; Peery could name no bail; and consequently he also was marched to prison, though prohibited from holding the least intercourse with Michaul.

The assizes soon came on. Michaul was arraigned; and, during his plea of "not guilty," his father appeared, unseen by him, in the gaoler's custody, at the back of the dock, or rather in an inner dock. The trial excited a keen and painful interest in the court, the bar, the jury-box, and the crowds of spectators. It was universally

known that a son had stolen a sheep, partly to feed a starving father ; and that out of the mouth of that father it was now sought to condemn him. "What will the old man do ?" was the general question which ran through the assembly : and while few of the lower orders could contemplate the possibility of his swearing to the truth, many of their betters scarce hesitated to make out for him a case of natural necessity to swear falsely.

The trial began. The first witness, the herdsman, proved the loss of the sheep, and the finding the dismembered carcass in the old barn. The policemen and the steward followed to the same effect, and the latter added the allusions which he had heard the father make to the son, upon the morning of the arrest of the latter. The steward went down from the table. There was a pause, and complete silence, which the attorney for the prosecution broke by saying to the crier, deliberately, "Call Peery Carroll."

"Here, Sir," immediately answered Peery, as the gaoler led him by a side-door, out of the back dock to the table. The prisoner started round ; but the new witness against him had passed for an instant into the crowd.

The next instant, old Peery was seen ascending the table, assisted by the gaoler, and by many other commiserating hands, near him. Every glance fixed on his face. The barristers looked wistfully up from their seats round the table ; the judge put a glass to his eye and seemed to study his features attentively. Among the audience, there ran a low but expressive murmur of pity and interest.

Though much emaciated by confinement, anguish, and suspense, Peery's cheeks had a flush, and his weak blue eyes glittered. The half-gaping expression of his parched and haggard lips was miserable to see. And yet he did not tremble much, nor appear so confounded as upon the day of his visit to the magistrate.

The moment he stood upright on the table, he turned himself fully to the judge, without a glance towards the dock.

"Sit down, sit down, poor man," said the judge !

"Thanks to you, my lord, I will," answered Peery,

"only, first, I'd ax you to let me kneel, for a little start;" and he accordingly did kneel, and after bowing his head, and forming the sign of the cross on his forehead, he looked up, and said—"My Judge in heaven above, 'tis you I pray to keep me to my duty, afore my earthly judge, this day;—amen!"—and then, repeating the sign of the cross, he seated himself.

The examination of the witness commenced, and humanely proceeded as follows—(the counsel for the prosecution taking no notice of the superfluity of Peery's answers).

"Do you know Michaul, or Michael Carroll, the prisoner at the bar?"

"Afore that night, Sir, I believed I knew him well; every thought of his mind, every bit of the heart in his body; afore that night, no living crature could throw a word at Michaul Carrol, or say he ever foigot his father' rearin', or his love of his good God;—an' sure the people are afther telling you by this time, how it came about that night—an' you, my lord,—an' ye, gintlemen,—an' all good Christians that hear me;—here I am to help to hang him—my own boy, and my only one—but, for all that, gintleman, ye ought to think of it; 'twas for the weenoch and the ould father that he done it;—indeed, an'deed, we hadn't a pyatee in the place; an' the sickness was among us, a start afore; it took the wife from him, and another baby; an' id had himself down, a week or so beforehand; an' all that day he was looking for work, but couldn't get a hand's turn to do; an' that's the way it was; not a mouthful for me an' little Peery; an', more betoken, he grew sorry for id, in the mornin', an' promised me not to touch a scrap of what was in the barn,—ay, long afore the steward an' the peelers came on us,—but was willin, to go among the neighbors an' beg our breakfast, along wid myself, from door to door, sooner than touch it."

"It is my painful duty," resumed the barrister, when Peery would at length cease,—“to ask you for closer information. You saw Michael Carroll in the barn, that night?—”

“*Musha*—The Lord pity him and me!—I did, Sir.”

“Doing what?”—

"The sheep between his hands," answered Peery, dropping his head, and speaking almost inaudibly.

"I must still give you the pain, I fear ;—stand up ; take the crier's rod ; and if you see Michael Carroll in court, lay it on his head."

"*Och, musha, musha*, Sir, don't ax me to do that!" pleaded Peery, rising, wringing his hands, and, for the first time, weeping—"och don't, my lord, don't, and may your own judgment be favourable, the last day !"

"I am sorry to command you to do it, witness ; but you must take the rod," answered the judge, bending his head close to his notes, to hide his own tears : and at the same time, many a veteran barrister rested his forehead on the edge of the table. In the body of the court were heard sobs.

"Michaul, *avich* ! Michaul, *a corra-ma-chree* !" exclaimed Peery, when at length he took the rod, and faced round to his son,—"*is id your father they make to do it, ma-bauchal ?*"

"My father does what is right," answered Michaul, in Irish. The judge immediately asked to have his words translated ; and when he learned their import, regarded the prisoner with satisfaction.

"We rest here, my lord," said the counsel, with the air of a man freed from a painful task.

The judge instantly turned to the jury-box.

"Gentleman of the jury. That the prisoner at the bar stole the sheep in question, there can be no shade of moral doubt. But you have a very peculiar case to consider. A son steals a sheep that his own famishing father and his own famishing son may have food. His aged parent is compelled to give evidence against him here for the act. The old man virtuously tells the whole truth, before you and me. He sacrifices his natural feelings—and we have seen that they are lively—to his honesty, and to his religious sense of the sacred obligations of an oath. Gentlemen, I will pause to observe, that the old man's conduct is strikingly exemplary, and even noble. It teaches all of us a lesson. Gentlemen, it is not within the province of a judge to censure the rigor of the proceedings which have sent him before us. But I venture to antici-

pate your pleasure that, notwithstanding all the evidence given, you will be enabled to acquit the old man's son, the prisoner at the bar. I have said there cannot be the shade of a moral doubt that he has stolen the sheep, and I repeat the words. But, Gentlemen, there is a legal doubt, to the full benefit of which he is entitled. The sheep has not been identified. The herdsman could not venture to identify it (and it would have been strange if he could) from the dismembered limbs found in the barn. To his mark on its skin, indeed, he might have positively spoken; but no skin has been discovered. Therefore, according to the evidence, and you have sworn to decide by that alone, the prisoner is entitled to your acquittal. Possibly, now that the prosecutor sees the case in its full bearing he may be pleased with this result.

While the jury, in evident satisfaction, prepared to return their verdict, Mr. Evans, who had but a moment before returned home, entered the court, and becoming aware of the concluding words of the judge, expressed his sorrow aloud, that the prosecution had ever been undertaken; that circumstances had kept him uninformed of it, though it had gone on in his name; and he begged leave to assure his lordship that it would be his future effort to keep Michael Carroll in his former path of honesty, by finding him honest and ample employment, and, as far as in him lay, to reward the virtue of the old father.

While Peery Carroll was laughing and crying in a breath, in the arms of his delivered son, a subscription, commenced by the bar, was mounting into a considerable sum for his advantage.

THE PUBLICAN'S DREAM.

THE fair-day had passed over in a little straggling town in the south-east of Ireland, and was succeeded by a languor proportioned to the wild excitement it never failed to create. But of all in the village, its publicans suffered most under the reaction of great bustle. Few of their houses appeared open at broad noon; and some—the envy of their competitors—continued closed even after that late hour. Of these latter, many were of the very humblest kind; little cabins, in fact, skirting the outlets of the village, or standing alone on the road-side, a good distance beyond it.

About two o'clock upon the day in question, a house of "Entertainment for Man and Horse," the very last of the description noticed, to be found between the village and the wild tract of mountain country adjacent to it, was opened by the proprietress, who had that moment arisen from bed.

The cabin consisted of only two apartments, and scarce more than nominally even of two; for the half-plastered wicker and straw partition, which professed to cut off a sleeping nook from the whole area enclosed by the clay walls, was little higher than a tall man, and, moreover, chinky and porous in many places. Let the assumed distinction be here allowed to stand, however, while the reader

casts his eyes around what was sometimes called the kitchen, sometimes the tap-room, sometimes the "dancing-flure." Forms which had run by the walls, and planks by way of tables, which had been propped before them, were turned topsy-turvey, and, in some instances, broken. Pewter-pots and pints, battered and bruised, or squeezed together and flattened, and fragments of twisted glass tumblers, lay beside them. The clay floor was scraped with brogue-nails and indented with the heel of that primitive foot-gear, in token of the energetic dancing which had lately been performed upon it. In a corner still appeared (capsized, however) an empty eight-gallon beer barrel, recently the piper's throne, whence his bag had blown forth the inspiring storms of jigs and reels, which prompted to more antics than ever did a bag of the laughing-gas. Among the yellow turf-ashes of the hearth lay, on its side, an old blackened tin kettle, without a spout—a principal utensil in brewing scalding water for the manufacture of whisky-punch; and its soft and yet warm bed was shared by a red cat, who had stolen in from his own orgies, through some cranny, since day-break. The single, four-paned window of the apartment remained veiled by its rough shutter, that turned on leather hinges; but down the wide yawning chimney came sufficient light to reveal the objects here described.

The proprietress opened her back door. She was a woman of about forty; of a robust, large boned figure; with broad, rosy visage, dark, handsome eyes, and well-cut nose; but inheriting a mouth so wide, as to proclaim her pure aboriginal Irish pedigree. After a look abroad, to inhale the fresh air, and then a remonstrance (ending in a kick) with the hungry pig, who ran, squeaking and grunting, to demand his long-deferred breakfast, she settled her cap, rubbed down her *prauskeen*, (coarse apron,) tucked and pinned up her skirts behind, and saying, in a loud, commanding voice, as she spoke into the sleeping-chamber—"Get up, now, at once, Jer, I bid you"—vigorously, if not tidily, set about putting her tavern to rights.

During her bustle, the dame would stop an instant, and bend her ear to listen for a stir inside the partition; but at last losing patience, she resumed—

"Why, then, my heavy hatred on you, Jer Mulcahy, is it gone into a *sauvaun* (pleasant drowsiness) you are, over again? or may be you stole out of bed, an' put your hand on one o' them ould, good-for-nothing books, that makes you the laziest man that a poor woman ever had under one roof wid her? ay, an' that sent you out of our dacent shop an' house, in the heart of the tawn below, an' banished us here, Jer Mulcahy, to sell drams o' whiskey, an' pots o' beer to all the riff-raff o' the counthry-side, instead o' the nate boots an' shoes you served your honest time to?"—She entered his, or her chamber, rather, hoping that she might detect him luxuriantly perusing in bed one of the mutilated books, a love of which (or, more truly, a love of indolence, thus manifesting itself) had indeed chiefly caused his downfall in the world: her husband, however, really tired after his unusual bodily efforts of the previous day, only slumbered, as Mrs. Mulcahy had at first anticipated; and when she had shaken and aroused him, for the twentieth time that morning, and scolded him until the spirit-broken blockhead whimpered, nay, wept, or pretended to weep, the dame returned to her household duties.

She did not neglect, however, to keep calling to him, every half-minute, until at last, Mr. Jeremiah Mulcahy strode into the kitchen; a tall, ill-contrived figure, that had once been well fitted out, but that now wore its old skin, like its old clothes, very loosely; and those old clothes, were a discoloured threadbare, half-polished kerseymere pair of trowsers, and aged superfine black coat, the last relics of his former Sunday finery: to which had recently and incongruously been added a calf-skin vest, a pair of coarse sky-blue, peasant's stockings, and a pair of brogues. His hanging cheeks and lips told, together, his present bad living and domestic subjection; and an eye that had been blinded by the small-pox, wore neither patch nor band; although in better days, it used to be genteelly hidden from remark—an assumption of consequence now deemed incompatible with his altered condition in society.

"Oh, Cauth! oh, I had such a dhrame," he said, as he made his appearance.

"An' I'll go bail you had," answered Cauth, "an' when do you ever go asleep without having one dhrame or another, that pesters me off o' my legs, the livelong day, 'till the night falls again to let you have another? Musha Jer, don't be ever an' always such a fool; an, never mind the dhrame now, but lend a hand to help me in the work o' the house; see the pewther there; haive it up, man-alive, an' take it out into the garden, and sit on the big stone, in the sun, an' make it look as well as you can, afther the ill usage it got last night; come, hurry, Jer—go an' do what I bid you."

He retired in silence to "the garden," a little patch of ground luxuriant in potatoes and a few cabbages. Mrs. Mulcahy pursued her work till her own sensations warned her that it was time to prepare her husband's morning or rather day-meal; for by the height of the sun, it should now be many hours past noon. So she put down her pot of potatoes; and, when they were boiled, took out a wooden trencher full of them, and a mug of sour milk, to Jer, determined not to summon him from his useful occupation of restoring the pints and quarts to something of their former shape.

Stepping through the back door, and getting him in view, she stopped short, in silent anger. His back was turned to her, because to the sun; and while the vessels, huddled about in confusion seemed little the better of his latent skill and industry, there he sat on his favourite round stone, studiously perusing, half-aloud to himself, some idle volume which, doubtless he had smuggled into the garden, in his pocket. Laying down her trencher and her mug, Mrs. Mulcahy stole forward on tiptoe, gained his shoulder without being heard, snatched the imperfect bundle of soiled pages out of his hand, and hurled it into a neighbours cabbage-bed.

Jeremiah complained, in his usual half-crying tone, declaring that "she never could let him alone, so she couldn't, and he would rather list for a soger, than lade such a life, from year's end to year's end,—so he would."

"Well, an' do then—an' whistle that idle cur off wid you," pointing to a nondescript puppy, which had lain happily coiled up at his master's feet until Mrs. Mulcahy's

appearance but that now watched her closely, his ears half cocked, and his eyes wide open, though his position remained unaltered. "Go along to the devil, you lazy whelp, you!"—she took up a pint in which a few drops of beer remained since the previous night, and drained it on the puppy's head, who instantly ran off, jumping sideways, and yelping as loud as if some bodily injury had really visited him;—"Yes—an' now you begin to yowl, like your masther, for nothing at all, only because a body axes you to stir your idle legs—hould your tongue, you foolish baste!"—she stooped for a stone—"one would think I scalded you."

"You know you did, once, Cauth, to the backbone; an' small blame for Shuffle to be afeard o' you ever since," said Jer.

This vindication of his own occasional remonstrances, as well as of shuffle's was founded in truth. When very young, just to keep him from running against her legs, while she was busy over the fire, Mrs. Mulcahy certainly had emptied a ladleful of boiling potatoe water upon the poor puppy's back; and from that moment it was only necessary to spill a drop of the coldest possible water, or of any cold liquid, on any part of his body, and he believed he was again dreadfully scalded, and ran out of the house screaming in all the fancied theories of torture.

"Will you ate your good dinner, now, Jer Mulcahy, an' promise to do something to help me, after it?—Mother o' Saints!"—thus she interrupted herself, turning towards the place where she had deposited the eulogised food—"see that you unlucky bird! May I never do an ill turn but there's the pig afther spilling the sweet milk, an' now shovelling the beautiful white-eyes* down her throat at a mouthful!"

Jer, really afflicted at this scene, promised to work hard, the moment he got his dinner, and his spouse, first procuring a pitch-fork to beat the pig into her sty, prepared a fresh meal for him, and retired to eat her own in the house, and then to continue her labour.

In about an hour, she bethought of paying him another

* Pieces of potato.

visit of inspection, when Jeremiah's voice reached her ear, calling out in disturbed accents—"Cauth!—Cauth! *a-vourneen!* For the love o' heaven, Cauth! where are you?"

Running to him, she found her husband sitting upright, though not upon his round stone, amongst the still untouched heap of pots and pints, his pock-marked face **very** pale, his single eye staring, his hands clasped and shaking, and moisture on his forehead.

"What!" she cried, "the pewther just as I left it, over again!"

"Oh, Cauth! Cauth! don't mind that now—but spake to me kind, Cauth, an' comfort me."

"Why what ails you, Jer *a-vourneen?*" affectionately taking his hand, when she saw how really agitated he was.

"Oh, Cauth, oh I had such a dhrame, now, in earnest, at any rate!"

"A dhrame she repeated, letting go his hand, "a dhrame, Jer Mulcahy! so, afther your good dinner, you go for to fall asleep, Jer Mulcahy, just to be ready wid a new dhrame for me, instead of the work you came out here to do, five blessed hours ago!"

"Don't scould me, now, Cauth; don't a-pet: only listen to me, an' then say what you like. You know the lonesome little glen between the hills, on the short cut for man or horse, to Kilbroggan?—well, Cauth, there I found myself in the dhrame; and I saw two sailors, tired afther a days hard walking, sitting before one of the big rocks that stand upright in the wild place; an' they were aiting, or dhinking, I couldn't make out which; and, one was a tall, sthrong, broad-shouldhered man, an' the other was sthrong, too, but short an' burly; an' while they were talking very civilly to each other, lo an' behold you, Cauth, I seen the tall man whip his knife into the little man; an' then they both sthruiggled, an' wrestled, an' schreeched together, till the rocks rung again; but at last the little man was a corpse; an' may I never see a sight o' glory, Cauth, but all this was afore me as plain as you are, in this garden! an' since the hour I was born, Cauth, I never got such a fright; an'—oh, Cauth! what's that now?"

"What is it, you poor fool, you, but a customer, come at last into the kitchen—an' time for us to see the face o' one this blessed day. Get up out o' that, wi' your dhramas—don't you hear 'em knocking? I'll stay here to put one vessel at laste to rights—for I see I must."

Jeremiah arose, groaning, and entered the cabin through the back door. In a few seconds he hastened to his wife, more terror-stricken than he had left her, and settling his loins against the low garden wall, stared at her.

"Why, then, duoul's in you, Jer Mulcahy—(Saints forgive me for cursing!)—and what's the matter wid you, at all at-all?"

"They're in the kitchen," he whispered.

"Well, an' what will they take?"

"I spoke never a word to them, Cauth, nor they to me;—I couldn't—an' I wont, for a duke's ransom: I only saw them stannin' together, in the dark that's coming on, behind the dour, an' I knew them at the first look—the tall one, an' the little one."

With a flout at his dreams, and his cowardice, and his good-for nothingness, the dame hurried to serve her customers. Jeremiah heard her loud voice addressing them, and their hoarse tones answering. She came out again for two pints to draw some beer, and commanded him to follow her, and "discoorse the customers." He remained motionless. She returned in a short time, and fairly drove him before her into the house.

He took a seat reinite from his guests, with difficulty pronouncing the ordinary words of "God save ye, gentlees," which they bluffly and heartily answered. His glances towards them were also few; yet enough to inform him that they conversed together like friends pledging healths, and shaking hands. The tall sailor abruptly asked him how far it was, by the short cut, to a village where they proposed to pass the night—Kilbroggan?—Jeremiah started on his seat, and his wife, after a glance and a grumble at him was obliged to speak for her husband. They finished their beer; paid for it: put up half a loaf, and a cut of bad watery cheese; saying that they might feel more hungry a few miles on, than they now did; and then they arose to leave the cabin. Jeremiah

glanced in great trouble around. His wife had fortunately disappeared; he snatched up his old hat, and, with more energy than he could himself remember, ran forward to be a short way on the road before them. They soon approached him: and then, obeying a conscientious impulse, Jeremiah saluted the smaller of the two, and requested to speak with him apart. The sailor, in evident surprise, assented. Jer vaguely cautioned him against going any farther that night, as it would be quite dark by the time he should get to the mountain pass, on the bye-road to Kilbroggan. His warning was made light of. He grew more earnest, asserting, what was not the fact, that it was "a bad road," meaning one infested by robbers. Still the bluff tar paid no attention, and was turning away. "Oh, Sir; oh stop, Sir," resumed Jeremiah, taking great courage, "I have a thing to tell you;" and he rehearsed his dream, averring that, in it, he had distinctly seen the present object of his solicitude set upon and slain by his colossal companion. The listener paused a moment: first looking at Jer, and then at the ground, very gravely: but the next moment he burst into a loud, and Jeremiah thought, frightful laugh, and walked rapidly to overtake his ship-mate. Jeremiah, much oppressed, returned home.

Towards dawn, next morning, the publican awoke in an ominous panic, and aroused his wife to listen to a loud knocking, and a clamour of voices at their door. She insisted there was no such thing, and scolded him for disturbing her sleep. A renewal of the noise, however, convinced even her incredulity, and showed that Jeremiah was right for the first time in his life, at least. Both arose, and hastened to answer the summons.

When they unbarred the front door, a gentleman, surrounded by a crowd of people of the village, stood before it. He had discovered on the bye-road through the hills from Kilbroggan, a dead body, weltering in its gore, and wearing sailor's clothes; had ridden on, in alarm; had raised the village; and some of its population, recollecting to have seen Mrs. Mulcahy's visitors of the previous evening, now brought him to her house to hear what she could say on the subject.

Before she could say anything, her husband fell sense-

less at her side, groaning dolefully. While the by-standers raised him, she clapped her hands, and exalted her voice in ejaculations, as Irishwomen, when grieved, or astonished, or vexed, usually do; and now, as proud of Jeremiah's dreaming capabilities, as she had before been impatient of them, rehearsed his vision of the murder, and authenticated the visit of the two sailors to her house, almost while he was in the act of making her the confidant of his prophetic ravings. The auditors stepped back in consternation, crossing themselves, smiting their breasts, and crying out, "The Lord save us! The Lord have mercy upon us!"

Jeremiah slowly awoke from his swoon. The gentleman who had discovered the body, commanded his attendants back to the lonesome glen, where it lay. Poor Jeremiah fell on his knees, and, with tears streaming down his cheeks, prayed to be saved from such a trial. His neighbours almost forced him along.

All soon gained the spot; a narrow pass between slanting piles of displaced rocks; the hills from which they had tumbled, rising brown and barren, and to a great height above and beyond them. And there, indeed, upon the stripe of verdure which formed the winding road through the defile, lay the corse of one of the sailors who had visited the publican's house the evening before.

Again Jeremiah dropt on his knees, at some distance from the body, exclaiming, "Lord save us!—yes! oh, yes, neighbours, this is the very place!—only—the saints be good to us, again!—'twas the tall sailor I seen killing the little sailor, and here's the tall sailor murdered by the little sailor!"

"Dhrames go by contraries, some way or another," observed one of his neighbours; and Jeremiah's puzzle was resolved.

Two steps were now indispensable to be taken: the county coroner should be summoned, and the murderer sought after. The crowd parted to engage in both matters simultaneously. Evening drew on when they again met in the pass; and the first, who had gone for the coroner, returned with him, a distance of near twenty miles; but the second party did not prove so successful. In fact,

they had discovered no clue to the present retreat of the supposed assassin.

The coroner impanelled his jury, and held his inquest under a large, upright rock, bedded in the middle of the pass, such as Jeremiah said he had seen in his dream. A verdict of wilful murder against the absent sailor was quickly agreed upon; but ere it could be recorded, all hesitated, not knowing how to individualize a man of whose name they were ignorant.

The summer night had fallen upon their deliberations, and the moon arose in splendour, shining over the top of one of the high hills that enclosed the pass, so as fully to illumine the bosom of the other. During their pause, a man appeared standing upon the line of the hill thus favoured by the moonlight, and every eye turned in that direction. He ran down the abrupt declivity beneath him; he gained the continued sweep of jumbled rocks which immediately walled in the little valley, springing from one to another of them with such agility and certainty, that it seemed almost magical; and a general whisper of fear now attested the fact of his being dressed in a straw hat, a short jacket, and loose white trowsers. As he jumped from the last rock upon the sward of the pass, the spectators drew back; but he, not seeming to notice them, walked up to the corpse, which had not yet been touched; took its hand; turned up its face into the moonlight, and attentively regarded the features; let the hand go; pushed his hat upon his forehead; glanced around him; recognised the person in authority; approached, and stood still before him, and said—"Here I am, Tom Mills, that killed long Harry Holmes, and there he lies."

The coroner cried out to secure him, now fearing that the man's sturdiness meant farther harm. "No need," resumed the self-accused;—"here's my bread-and-cheese knife the only weapon about me;" he threw it on the ground: "I come back just to ax you, commodore, to order me a cruize after poor Harry, bless his precious eyes, wherever he is bound."

"You have been pursued hither?"

"No, bless your heart; but I wouldn't pass such ano-

ther watch as the last twenty-four hours, for all the prize-money won at Trafalgar. 'Tisn't in regard of not tasting food or wetting my lips ever since I fell foul of Harry, or of hiding my head, like a cursed animal o' the yearth, and starting if a bird only hopped nigh me; but I cannot go on living on this tack no longer; that's it; and the least I can say to you, Harry, my hearty."

"What caused your quarrel with your comrade?"

"There was no jar or jabber betwixt us, d'you see me."

"Not at the time, I understand you to mean; but surely you must have long owed him a grudge?"

"No, but long loved him; and he, me."

"Then, in heaven's name, what put the dreadful thought in your head?"

"The devil, commodore—(the horned lubber!) and another lubber to help him"—pointing at Jeremiah, who shrank to the skirts of the crowd. "I'll tell you every word of it, commodore, as true as a log-book. For twenty long and merry years, Harry and I sailed together, and worked together, thro' a hard gale, sometimes, and thro' hot sun, another time; and never a squally word came between us till last night, and then it all came of that lubberly swipes-seller, I say again. I thought as how it was a real awful thing that a strange landsman, before ever he laid eyes on either of us, should come to have this here dream about us. After falling in with Harry, when the lubber and I parted company, my old mate saw I was cast down, and he told me as much in his own gruff, well-meaning way; upon which I gave him the story, laughing at it. *He* didn't laugh in return, but grew glum—glummer than I ever seed him; and I wondered, and fell to boxing about my thoughts, more and more—(deep sea sink that cursed thinking and thinking, say I!—it sends many an honest fellow out of his course:)—and 'its hard to know the best man's mind,' I thought to myself. Well; we came on the tack into these rocky parts, and Harry says to me all on a sudden, 'Tom, try the soundings, here, ahead, by yourself—or let me, by myself.' I axed him why? 'No matter,' says Harry, again, 'but after what you chawed about, I don't like your company any farther, till we fall in again at the next vil-

jage.' 'What, Harry,' I cries, laughing heartier than ever, 'are you afeard of your own mind with Tom Mills?' 'Pho,' he made answer, walking on before me, and I followed him.

" 'Yes,' I kept saying to myself, 'he *is* afeard of his own mind with his old ship-mate.' 'Twas a darker night than this, and when I looked a-head, the devil (for now I know 'twas *he* that boarded me!) made me take notice what a good spot it was for Harry to 'fall foul of me. And then I watched him making way before me, in the dark, and couldn't help thinking he was the better man of the two—a head and shoulders over me, and a match for any two of my inches. And then, again, I brought to mind that Harry would be a heavy purse the better of sending me to Davy's locker, seeing we had both been just paid off, and got a lot of prize-money, to boot;—and, at last—(the real red devil having fairly got me helm a larboard)—I argued with myself that Tom Mills would be as well alive, with Harry Holmes's luck in his pocket, as he could be dead, and *his* in Harry Holmes's; not to say nothing of taking one's own part, just to keep one's self afloat, if so be Harry let his mind run as mine was running.

" All this time Harry never gave me no hail, but kept tacking thro' these cursed rocks; and that, and his last words, made me doubt him more and more. At last he stopped nigh where he now lies, and sitting with his back to that high stone, he calls for my blade to cut the bread and cheese he had got at the village; and while he spoke I believed he looked glummer and glummer, and that he wanted the blade, the only one between us, for some't else than to cut bread and cheese; tho' now I don't believe no such thing howsumdever; but then I did; and so, d'you see me, commodore, I lost ballast all of a sudden, and when he stretched out his hand for the blade—(hell's fire blazing up in my lubberly heart!) 'Here it is, Harry,' says I, and I gives it to him in the side!—once, twice, in the right place!"—(the sailor's voice, hitherto calm, though broken and rugged, now rose into a high, wild cadence)—"and then how we did grapple! and sing out one to another! ahoy! yeho! aye; till I thought the whole crew

of devils answered our hail from the hill-tops!—But I hit you again and again, Harry ! before you could master me,” continued the sailor, returning to the corpse, and once more taking its hand—“until at last you struck,—my old messmate !—And now—nothing remains for Tom Mills—but to man the yard-arm !”

The narrator stood his trial at the ensuing assizes, and was executed for this avowed murder of his shipmate ; Jeremiah appearing as a principal witness. Our story may seem drawn either from imagination, or from mere village gossip ; its chief acts rest, however, upon the authority of members of the Irish bar, since risen to high professional eminence ; and they can even vouch that, at least, Jeremiah asserted the truth of “The Publican’s Dream.”

THE ACE OF CLUBS.

AT English fairs, business and merriment are kept rather distinct. The buying and selling of sheep, oxen, and horses, commonly occur before the gingerbread-booths, the toy-booths, and the dancing-booths—(such as the dancing in the latter is found to be)—are visited, and take place upon some spot detached from the crowded encampments of pleasure and finery. At Irish fairs, however, important sales, halfpenny adventures in gambling, love-making, dancing—(“the right sort at a fair”)—and perhaps some harmless fighting, used, in our time, to go hand in hand from the opening of the blessed day. Hence, our Irish fair was a less orderly but a more rousing scene than one in this inveterately decorous island. While the mind of a serious spectator is filled with the important circumstance of groups of “strong farmers” bargaining about the transfer of fifty or a hundred great horned beasts, his lively or lighter sensibilities might be appealed to by the oratory of the proprietress of a show of fragile nick-nacks, alarmed lest some of those animals should overtrow and shatter at a touch her whole stock in trade: or a rich-cheeked country girl, laughing loudly, and struggling “just for dacency,” half caused by her half-proffered lips, the uncouth smack which startles our observer, and which is the payment for her swain’s “treat” to a grass-green ribbon, or a pair of scarlet garters; or the rub-a-dub of a set of jiggers,” with their cries of ecstasy, strikes upon his ear from some adjacent public-house; or perhaps two “factions,” who have been at war—as they would themselves say—“ever since their grandfather’s time,” emit fiercer shouts, as, huddled amongst cattle of all descriptions, and striking the animals as often as their own heads, they fight their twentieth pitched battle for some cause of dispute which neither can explain.

About forty years ago, when the reader had most to do with such an assemblage, an accompanying feature, now almost worn out by the progress of gentility, was observable. While elderly farmers plodded to the important rendezvous strictly in the spirit of men of business, their sons, or perhaps some youthful landholders of four or five hundred acres, pushed in from the country on nearly whole-blood horses, arrayed in the Sunday suit, which, at each weekly mass, made them the stars of their district chapels, purely or chiefly to ride up and down through throngs of men, women, and beasts, vouching their attractions in the face of half the assembled county, and also in the faces of rural "darkers" of the other sex, who, perched on pillions behind their fathers, and flaming in all colours, came pretty nearly in the same policy, to the great general mart for the day.

A group of such gallant amateurs, standing still because they have been blocked up by surrounding droves of cattle, is presented to the reader, at the fair, holden about forty years ago, to which we direct our attention. The young men were all known to each other; and they talked or laughed cheerily, and seemed fully enjoying their day's adventures.

"But stop, boys," said one, "here comes Martin Brophy, if he sees us so merry he'll swear we're laughing at him."

"And then put a quarrel on us all," said another.

"Then ye won't spake to him, boys!" asked a third.

"What's the use, Jack! Ever since things went so contrary against him, you can't look but he thinks it a slight, so that there's no managing with Martin; and I, for one, will just let him go quietly by on his poor broken-down half-blood."

"Besides, Tom, though an auld head can't be put on young shoulders, (a truth we all stand up for,) Martin *done the vengeance** entirely, in regard of his behaviour to little Calty Morissy."

"Yes, and the priest *caeling him*† for it, at last mass, Sunday-se'mmit (week,)" added a pious person of the party; "but here he is! See, boys!" speaking loudly, and pointing his whip to a drove of cows and oxen, while the eyes of his companions followed him—"them browns is the cleanest cattle in the fair to my mind."

Martin Brophy passed them with eyes studiously averted in the opposite direction, as if he had determined to anticipate their slight; and yet his erect carriage, his

* Went too far.

† Rebuking him.

knitted brow, and his protruded lips, destroyed the ease which should have given to the act its best expression, and suggested, instead, a bitter and haughty consciousness of the presence of his former companions in the carouse and in the sporting-field.

They continued their observations by turns.

"There he goes, the proudest and the poorest grandee in Leinster."

"Look at the hat!—the poor hair will be growing through it with the next crop."

"But the auld green!"—(Martin's coat)—"*it* aught to bring him new ones by that time, for it's long ago it ran to seed between his shoulders."

"And what brings him to the fair, boys?"

"To sell auld Nora:" (Martin's skeleton steed.)

"Yes—to the tanners."

"Or to cut a dash on her back-bone."

"Aye—before Dora Marum; only she's not here; I stopt at the house to-day morning, to know if she'd be at the fair with auld cranky Dan, the father of her; but, no, purty Dora couldn't come."

"Then Martin won't take the light out of her eyes entirely this blessed day."

"Hoot, tut, man-a-live; in jest or arnest, that's all gone by; Dan gave him the cauld shawldher long ago."

They separated to resume the exhibition of their handsome steeds and admirable persons through the fair. We follow the individual of whom they have been speaking.

He was a man as young as any of them; better featured than any, notwithstanding that premature sufferings and the conflict of strong passions had thinned and swarthed his cheek; nay, his air, and the character of those features, gave him nearer claims than any to a gentlemanlike appearance, although, as they had truly remarked, his attire was shabby.

He had not overheard a word of the jeers spoken at his expense, but his sensitive mind imagined such a dialogue between his former friends, and imagined it to an extent even beyond the reality; and the petty ferment consequently called up in his bosom, worked his features and temper more violently than greater misfortunes had that day done.

They scoffingly wondered why he appeared at the fair. Martin Brophy could not, himself, have satisfied their idle and cruel curiosity. He could only have stated, were

he so inclined, that upon the approach of bailiffs to his house, early in the morning, to seize his furniture—the last of his earthly goods—he had run to the stable, saddled old Nora, jumped on her back, and while his mother's low wailings filled his ears, pushed the feeble beast out of sight and hearing of a scene which maddened his heart, but which he could not help; and that then, waywardly yielding to an unaccountable impulse, he had hurried into the thick of another scene, the most unlikely of any he might select, to assuage his angry feelings.

"And this," he muttered, "this is the end of slashing Mick Brophy's divil-may-care days; of his hunting days, and his dancing days, and his cock-fighting days: ay, and of his good-fellow nights, with their songs, and their brave cursing and swearing, and screeing and tattering. O father! you left us too soon for Mick's good. Luck out of your grave and see him now. Not worth a lady halfpenny stock-lock and barrel; not a dacent tack to his back; the auld mother crying at home to the bare walls in the empty house; Dora Marum lost; these very *kouts** that you left me a head-and-shoulders over—and that I made my equals only to let them make me what I am at rist come to—these very scheming cringing, *palavering** hounds——Oh!"—yielding to the bitterness of his immediate position—"by the light o' the world! I'd a'most stop thinking of every thing else that once pleased me, only for as much good fortune as 'would again put me where I was—above them; and then, with my foot on their necks, instead of the hand to their hands, as it used to be!"

His reverie was interrupted by the quick approach of two bodies of screaming rioters. As they capered past him, he drew, even from their noise and outrage, a renewed cause for embittered regret. "Ay! Dullard's faction and Campion's faction!" repeating their war-cries and now soliloquizing rather aloud—"But who shouts Brophy's faction to-day? though I remember the day when if any tenant or follower of his shouted that name, a hundred good *atpeens* would jump at the sound." "An' there's one, at last, to shout it yet, Masther Martin," said a low, thick-necked, red-headed lad at his side—"whoo!" jumping among a pacific crowd—"whoo for Masther Brophy? who'll look crooked at him? will you? or you?"

Martin was much surprised at this unrecognized friend so Quixotically challenging the whole world on his ac-

* Paltry fellows.

* Sycophantic.

count; but as the hero, after prancing here and there, and peering up hostility into many faces, only earned for his stunted, burley, unwarlike figure, and for the cause it abetted, contemptuous sneers or loud laughter, on the part of the athletic fellows around him, poor Brophy's wonder changed into increased mortification.

A little old man, dressed in the common peasant garb of the district; namely, coat, vest, breeches and hose, all grey, with a two-buckled flaxen wig, and a foxy felt hat, staggered up the street, holding a stick, and every now and then stopping and trying to balance himself in order to make a solemn drunken soliloquy; and upon these occasions he feebly flourished his stick, and seemed to come to the conclusion that he was aggrieved and valiant.

"Or you!" continued Martin's knight, as the old fellow met his eye—"mind this, Masther Martin"—speaking under his breath, while he passed Brophy—"a friendlier blow was never struck for your good"—and darting on, down tumbled the man of soliloquies, and with a dozen pursuers at his heels, Martin one of them; away scampered the aggressor. For notwithstanding the lad's whisper, Martin could not think that the little old man had any thing to do with him, nor with his assaulter. There was in the blow a matter-of-fact kind of character; its very sound on the other's skull, might suggest an act without a motive, an effect without a cause.

None of the indignant pursuers succeeded in apprehending the red-haired champion; and Martin returned to condole with the inconsiderable victim, sacrificed so much against his will, to his feudal importance.

The sire had arisen and gone on. Partly by inquiries, partly by a gory and devious tract, Martin traced him out of the fair, and then out of the town. Spurring his sorry nag, he overtook him upon the road towards his own sad home. The sufferer still staggered, but now more from weakness than inebriety.

"Tell me that young rascal's name, daddy."

"Throth, an' I don't know the poor boy's name."

"Come back into the town, then; he will surely be caught, and you must be ready to take the law of him."

"Why then," in a very kind and simple tone, "I believe we can't do that, either, *avich*;" (my son;)" "I owe the poor boy no ill-will" an' sure I von't go for to put him in raal trouble, jest for a little mather of a *clipe*;" (blow,) "of a stiick, that I'm sure, afore my Maker, there was no harum in;

an' I'll engage he's a good, honest, poor slob for all that."

"Then let me help you a bit of the road, daddy:" Martin alighted, and throwing Nora's bridle over one arm, caused his tottering companion to lean on the other.

After walking along slowly for some time—"The blessings be in your path for ever, avich; sure here's my poor cabin," said the old man, stopping at the closed door of a very inferior habitation even of the kind he named.

"This?" questioned Martin Brophy—"why, this, I remember, used to be Musha Merry's—and stop"—looking attentively into his face—"Yes—now I remember you too—you *are* ould Musha Merry, our great fairy-man."

"Hushth, hushth—a-pet—manners to *them*—manin' you no offence, but the best o' good, conthrary-wise; poor Musha Merry I am—*their* fiend, an' the friend o' the good Christhms, whenever *they* let me."

"Oho!" ejaculated Martin, assuming a sneer, but from the effects of his early education, not fully feeling it however—"and didn't you send a body to me, the other day, to tell me not to let the heart be cast down entirely, for all that's come and gone, yet?"

"Of a thruth, an' so I did, avich; just out o' the pity is on my soul for your only troubles, an' the kind-of-a-sort-of a knowledge I have that there's loock in store for you, let the priest scauld you an' curse you, off o' the althar, as often as he likes, plaise his reverence."

"With help from the fairies!" laughed Martin.

"O, hushth, now again, *avich*, an' call them no names, but lave them to themselves, my honey, Masther Martin; an' no, in throth no; but wid help from them, sure they haven't the power to give the riches, like others, much as they can do in every thing else."

"Then with help from the Barrymount gang!"

"Avoch, nien, nien, entirely; duv you think, Masther Martin Brophy, my pet, I'd go for to give you the advice to take part wid them rappanees o' the arth—Nien, nien;—and yet,"—speaking more expressively—"there's a way, so there is—but hushth, again!" the door of his cabin opened, and a group of men and women appeared at it, scraping their feet or dropping curtsies to him. "See, here's some o' the poor neighbours waitin' for me to give 'em the good o' the trifle o' knowledge that's come to me, somehow or someway—a good day to ye, neighbours, honies; come in, Masther Martin, avich, an' just tie your bridle to the hasp and rest yourself on the chair

a bit, and when I do my endayvours for the poor Christhms, sure then you an' I can go on wid our own little *shanachus*—(gossiping.)”

Doing as he was exhorted, Martin Brophy followed Musha Merry into his cabin. More people than had appeared at the door were tarrying for him under its roof, the greater number women, who sat on the mud floor, with their back to the mud wall. Martin was aware that, as patients crowd the waiting-rooms of a popular town or city physician, these persons had come to get charms from Musha Merry, for evils inflicted upon themselves, or upon their families, or upon their cows, horses, or crops.

Occupying “the chair,” so described, because it was the only one in the house, Martin looked on attentively, and with more deference towards the wise man’s gifts, than his language might have expressed at the door: for unconsciously he agreed in the general homage now paid, in his presence, to the wizard-doctor, if, indeed, he had ever really felt disposed to withhold his share of it.

Musha Merry first retired behind a wicker partition, or screen, which ran half way across the waste apartment, at its upper end, expressing modestly an intention to charm away his own broken head, before he engaged in the service of any other afflicted person; and after having been invisible for a short time, he re-appeared, every previous mark of violence effaced from his cheek and temple, or hidden under a more ample wig, while his crabbed old features simpered all over with their usual insinuating good-nature, and his glossy grey eyes were almost shut up in the pucker of wrinkles, which the bland expression induced round them.

A pale, melancholy, over-watched woman, arose, curtsying, and calling him “sir,” and stated the first case that claimed his professional attention. “The good people” had sent a great “faver” (fever) to her only son, and the doctor gave the boy up, and the priest gave him up, and what was she to do!—Musha Merry made very light of the matter, and of the skill of his learned brethren, the doctor and the priest, and speaking smooth words of comfort and assurance, gave her a phial filled with some coloured liquid, murmured at her ear directions for administering it, received his fee, and the sorrowful woman slipt lightly over the threshold.

A half-starved catlier next represented, in a whining miserable voice, how his one cow had been “over-

looked." The fairy-man handed him a little bag to tie under her left ham, and smilingly pocketed sixpence more.

A second woful mother, holding an emaciated, silent, starving infant upon her arms, rose from her squatting position at the wall, and her words were—"Avoch, Misther Musha Merry, sir, sure this poor crature of a baby isn't wid me at all, but gone off wid *them*"—meaning, and plainly understood to mean, notwithstanding the seeming puzzle of two identities, that the child which, a few months before, she had brought into the world, had been kidnapped by the fairies, and the certainly preternatural looking babe she held out for inspection, left in its stead.

Another poor peasant applied to have "the fairy-worum pult out of his tooth, because it wouldn't let him sleep night or day, wid the atin' it war givin' him;" and Musha Merry procured a cow's horn, burnt a reed in it, put the pointed end into the patient's gaping mouth, whispered at the other end, then shook it over the palm of his hand till a little red worm fell out; and the man departed with a happy grin on his features, declaring that his tooth-ache was perfectly cured.

Many more curious complaints received attention from the fairy-doctor. At length Martin Brophy and he were left alone. Then old Musha Merry bolted the crazy door of his desolate cabin, and rubbing his hands softly, and simpering in his most affectionate style, approached the young man, and seated himself upon a large stone at his feet.

"And so this is *not* the way I'm to win the good luck that is in store for me," said Martin.

The wizard slightly glancing towards the upper end of the cabin, softly said, "It is not."

"And yet there *is* a way you tell me," resumed Martin Brophy, after a break in the conversation, during which his companion kept his eyes fixed on the floor, very seriously.

"There *is*," slowly answered Musha Merry: and he did not offer to go on, nor yet raise his head. Deep silence ensued, except that Martin could distinctly hear every wheezing respiration of the old man at his feet. The pause and his situation began to grow disagreeable to Martin Brophy, he could not tell why. As his eye glanced round, a washy gleam of December sunshine which, entering through a small aperture in the broken thatch roof, crept over the rough floor, as unaccountably made him almost start. In fact, the young farmer *was* superstitious, and the dreary and peculiar lonesomeness

and silence of the fairy-man's abode, together with the mysterious hint as to "the way" in which he was to retrieve his fortune, and the suspended explanation of that hint, fully called up this weak sentiment.

Still Musha Merry did not go on, and Martin resumed in a low voice: "Well; and what is that way?"

His counsellor now looked up into his face, every feature at rest, and his shadowy grey eyes widely opened;—the change of expression was, indeed, so remarkable, that Martin Brophy returned, in a kind of fascination, the glossy and vague glare with which he found himself regarded.

"You're afeard o' the priest, so you are, tho' he done his best on you already, or I'd tell you," said Musha Merry.

"Curse the priest!" cried Martin Brophy, in a mixed feeling of impatience at the wizard's hesitation, and anger at, as he believed, the unmerited disgrace which his clergyman had stamped on him.

"That'll do for a beginnin'," muttered the old man; "an' now I'll *show* you the way, afore I tell it to you!" he arose from the stone; "you havn't much o' the goold or the silver in your pockets, Masther Martin, avich?"

"Not a cross to keep the devil out o' them—and my mother is at home without her dinner."

"Ochone!—an' sure that's a hard case—but a friend is near at hand, Masther Martin; never mind me, for a start now, only observe this."—

He drew a dingy card from his bosom, and holding it out for his companion's inspection, Martin saw that it was the Ace of Clubs: and then Musha Merry hobbled to the upper end of the waste apartment, and hid himself behind the wicker partition.

"I'm kneelin' down, a *vich-ma-chree*," (son of my heart,) he said from his concealment. Martin's bosom beat quick. In short time the old man's voice sounded again.

"An' now it's time for you to put your hand in your hat that's close by your side."

Martin did so, and his moving fingers caused to jingle in the hat some pieces of coin. He snatched it up, looked into it, and saw three guineas. His bosom's quick throbbing was arrested by a spasm, and as Musha Merry again advanced, smiling in a congratulating and affectionate manner, he saw that his young friend was deadly pale.

"You knelt down, you say, to send me these!" questioned Martin Brophy.

"Throth, aye, on the two poor knees, avich."

"Did you pray?"

"Och, an' sure I did, from the bottom o' my heart."

"Tell me ——" Martin slowly stood up, and glanced stealthily round the cabin as he whispered—"Tell me—did you pray—to God?"

Musha Merry bent his head close to Martin Brophy's face, and also answered in a whisper—"No."

Martin sprang to the door, and began hastily to unbolt it, having put up, however, almost unconsciously, the three guineas.

"An' you won't wait to larn *the way*, yourself?" asked the old man, as he crossed the unhallowed threshold.

Martin muttered an incoherent dissent.

"Well, avich; when it's most pleasin' to you, to get the hapes o' goold, instead o' them three beggarly guineas, sure you know who to come to, to larn you;—or, if you like, I'll be in the little glin o'Coile at the fint light, to morrow mornin'—it's a good place for talkin' of id."

Without uttering a word, Martin mounted old Nora and rode off.

"Come out here to me, now, Maurice, you poor creature," continued Musha Merry, again carefully bolting his cabin door.

A man about forty strode from behind the wicker, screen. Before he appeared, there had been a rustling, as if of straw; and from his rubbing his eyes, and also from the fact of bits of straws being stuck through his tangled black hair, and to different parts of his attire, it would seem that this concealed inmate of the cabin was asleep, or dozing, previous to Musha Merry's call. His person and limbs were athletic and coarse, his brow scowling; and he held a large pistol in his hand.

"By dad, Maurice, my poor boy, I b'lieve we are nigh hand to our snug little revenge on the Brophy's at last, though it cost the simple auld father o' you a'most thirty long years to bring it about," resumed Musha Merry, rubbing his hands, and smiling on his son.

"Will he 'list wid us, father?" growled Maurice.

"I didn't ax him, and I won't ax him a-while, yet, avich; becace, for all his troubles, an' ru'nation, the good bringin'-up he got from his mother, does be comin' into his head, an' the priest-talk, an' the masses, an' them things; an' if we bid him be a bould Barrymount-boy, at once, 'twould frighten him, may be, an' he'd dhraw back

from us entirely, not to talk o' the chance o' tellin, the neighbours some of our sacrets."

"Then I don't know what you spake of."

"Wait, avich. Sure I made him b'lieve that the Ace o' Clubs, wid help from the card's masther, sent him three guineas, aut o' the brave booty that came to your share last night; an' I'm a big fool in my ould days, Maurice, if he rests night or day till he spakes to the card himsel'; an' as soon as he does, tho' he'll be as far from the hapes o' goold as ever he was, little o' that *rhaumaush*, (non-sense,) about the priests, and the prayers, and the mass-songs, I'll stay wid Martin Brophy: and then we'll have our own time to list him, Maurice, avich, jist by promisin' the riches in another vay."

"The priest was lookin' for him to-day mornin', father; an' if he comes across him now, he'll take Martin out o' your hands."

"We'll do our endayvour to keep the' both broken friends Maurice; Nance Dempsy must throw herself in the poor boy's way to-night; an' afore daylight, the priest 'ill be tauld where to find them together; Nance is a duck-o'-the world, in regard of a decoy-duck."

Meantime, Martin Brophy rode homeward. The winter evening fell rapidly. He came in sight of the front of his house; no usual lights glimmered through its windows. He turned into the back-yard, put up Nora, groomed her carefully, gave her a bunch of musty hay, crossed to the kitchen-door, raised the latch, and heard the low lament of his mother before he saw her, seated on a low stool at the hearth, and confronted by a very old woman, her nurse; the embers of some twigs, gathered by the latter from the neighbouring hedges, flickering between them.

With a shrill scream, his only living parent sprang up to throw herself round his neck: she had entertained fearful thoughts as to the cause of his absence.

"Come into the little parlour, Martin, my son," she said; then changing her voice, "Avoch! an' sure I forgot. I left it myself to sit down here, on this stool, borrowed at a neighbour's cabin, becane it broke my heart to look at the four bare walls, that often saw us and ours comfortable and happy between 'em. An' I'm afeared you're dhry and hungry, Martin, my son."

"Cush," said Martin, throwing a guinea to the old

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woman—"hurry down to the village, and get us something to ate and to dhrink."

The feeble creature, with cries of wonder and joy, tottered off on her errand. His mother, also surprised, inquired how he had procured the guinea. He hesitated. She looked alarmed, and hoped he had not—— And she stopped, and with streaming eyes gazed on him.

"Mother, mother," he said hastily, "don't be afeard—I neither killed nor robbed for it."

Cush returned with food and spirits. She had also providently thought of the fire, and a pile of turf now blazed on the hearth. Martin and his mother ate their meal off their knees; the bailiffs had not left them a table. It was scarce over when horsemen rode up to the front of the house, hallooing heartily. The old nurse went to the hall-door to "discoorse them;" Martin stepped after her to listen. He soon ascertained that the visitors were two of the "squireens," who had insulted him that day at the fair; and who now, elated with liquor, turned off the main road to taunt him farther, by asking a bed at his desolate house. When, in consequence of Cush's representations, that there was "no one in id," they galloped off, still hallooing, "I'll match ye yet," said Martin, grinding his teeth, "if I burned for it."

"Mother," he resumed abruptly, in some time after, while he liberally helped himself to the whiskey, "tell me some o' your choice old stories about ghosts, and fairies, and Ould Nick."

"Christ save us, Martin Brophy," crossing herself.

"Yes, mother; you know you had plenty of 'em for me when I didn't ask for 'em—and never mind the night it is—the blacker to us, the more we want something to put it out of our heads"—he drank another deep draught—

Come, mother, I remember a capital story of yours that I'll thank you to tell me once again—about old Squire Jarvis, and a friend of his."

After many demurs, the mother began her tale. It was an old one; or rather a local version of one, common to every country in Christendom. Squire Jarvis was a very bad man, and led a very wicked life, and became very poor in his old age. Every body forsook him, and he lived in a lone house, a great way off the road, where he did nothing from morning to night but eat and drink, and sleep, and commit sin, and scold the few servants who remained to share his fortune. One Sunday even-

ing, after dinner, and after a good deal of wine too, he got into such a passion with his own man, and so abused and swore at him, that the domestic declared he would quit his service as soon as he paid him his wages. Now Squire Jarvis could pay him no wages at all, and this made him downright furious; he turned the man out of the room, and fell asleep in his arm-chair by the fire, still cursing and swearing, and just as he said—"I'll sell myself, body and sawl, for one barrel-bag-ful of goold."

About twelve o'clock he awoke, when everything was still in the house, and looking across the fire, there was a dark-complexioned gentleman, decently dressed in black, sitting in the chair opposite to his, and attentively watching him—but the tale need not be continued; Squire Jarvis got the "barrel-bag-ful of goold" on the usual terms.

"And sure you're not such a fool, mother, as to b'lieve such a thing can happen?" demanded Martin Brophy.

His mother, mingling pious and frightened ejaculations with her answer, had no doubt but it could. Nor had Martin himself much doubt when he asked the question. He only wanted confirmation from his mother's anticipated assurances; for he misconceived the mode by which Musha Merry proposed to endow him with wealth.

The distressed parent, wearied with grief and watching, began to nod. Martin arose to make up some kind of a couch for her. Cush, again provident, had ordered straw; upon part of it, in the corner of the kitchen, next to the fire, he left his mother and her old nurse to stretch themselves; the rest he took into his own chamber. And here he flung it from him, locked himself in, holding his rushlight in his hand, stared wildly and fiercely around.

"Would he, without Musha Merry's knowledge, make *the call*!" At the home thought, his forehead grew moist and cold, his scalp froze, his limbs shook. A glance at his desperate position, aided by the effects of the spirits, controlled his horror. "He would!"—and, as the preface to his call, he furiously, though unconsciously, stamped upon the floor. The whole house vibrated to the shock, and something slightly clattered against the wall of the chamber. He looked up. It was an old wooden crucifix hanging by a thread from a nail—the only article which the bailiffs had hesitated to drag away. He rivetted his eye upon the symbol of his redemption and his hope; he trembled again, but it was with new fears; he dashed down his rushlight—trod on it—plunged on his knees into

his straw; and amid choking sobs, Martin Brophy half muttered a prayer—but it was a prayer to God.

In about an hour, a wailing, soft voice sounded from under his window. He arose; looked out, and saw a girl sitting on the ground, and rocking to and fro, and clapping her hands. He opened the window and spoke to her. She said she had missed her father and her brothers at the fair; had strayed so far in quest of them; and now did not know what to do for the night; but the public-houses were open in the village, only she had no money. Martin went out to her through the window, and accompanied her to the village. The least respectable of the public-houses gave them entertainment and lodging for payment before-hand. Martin, but too well acquainted from former experience with the ways of the house, spent his second guinea before he fell asleep, and ere he awoke in the morning, Nance Dempsy had gone off with the other.

With remorse for recent sin, added to his frenzy of the previous night, he hurried out of the house. It was yet scarce day-break, though not an early hour. As he issued from the door, a horseman, standing still, confronted him, as if watching the egress of some person. At a glance he knew his rigid parish-priest.

“And I find you coming out from this house, after all, Martin Brophy!” he said; “you have been warned from the altar; take heed you do not expose yourself to be cursed from the altar.”

“Curse away!” answered Martin, bounding across the road into the fields, the worst species of desperation now blackening in his bosom, namely, that of lost character and conscious guilt.

Without thinking of an interview with Musha Merry, he gained the little glen of Coile, where, in happier and better days, Dora Marum and he had often sat together. In summer it was a beautiful close scene; a fairy dell, blocked up at one end, by a face of shrubbed rock, adown which trickled a silver line of water, and almost embowered at either side by beech and ash trees, that dropped their foliage to the very surface of the mossy sod under foot. Now, upon a howling winter’s morning, and while twilight yet brooded over it, the place bore, on the contrary, a drear and fierce character. The thread of shining water had become a red and foamy torrent, which tore through the middle of the little valley; the naked trees

groaned and clattered their tangled branches in the gust, chorusing its sullen roar; and the piping of the wind among them sometimes filled Martin's ear like human or superhuman voices. Immediately under the fall of water, there was a deep and boiling basin, and self-destruction, by a plunge into this, was now Martin's impulse. Despairing, and even depraved as his heart had become, he rejected, since his change of feeling the previous night, prolonged and successful life by virtue of a cold-blooded covenant with the enemy of man. He glanced around to note if he was alone! A figure was just disappearing out of the dell—he thought his champion at the fair; and now he identified his red-haired friend with Keeraun Dernphy, Dora's foster-brother. Another figure, that of a female, stood watching him. He ran towards her; it was Dora Marum—he fell with a cry at her feet.

Dora called on him to "Stand up like a man!"

"You do not care for me now, Dora: and for that reason little do I care for myself."

"Stand up, Martin Brophy!"—the tall, finely-formed brown-complexioned girl spoke with energy, and her brown cheek reddened, and her black eye grew expressive. "I do care for you, yet; though, indeed, you care so little for yourself; and though you have given me no cause to tell you so." He arose. "Stand up in earnest, Martin;—mind your life, and your fortune must mend with it, and then my father will no longer hinder me from showing *how much* I care for you."

"And not till then, Dora? not till I grow rich?" cried Martin, in total despair of his chance of succeeding according to this advice.

"No, Martin Brophy, not till then," answered old Daniel Marum, gaining his daughter's side. "Come home, Dora; it's plain language I spake to you, Martin, my boy; grow as rich as will make you Dora's match, and then take her, with my blessing;" he and Dora went away.

"Grow rich! haw! shouted Martin, furiously. Old Musha Merry tottered before him, and repeated his offer to "larn him the way haw." Martin angrily desired him to begone, adding, that "the horned duoul might lave him, body and soul—and should, soon—but not at a price." His counsellor smilingly assured him that he greatly mistook; that no such hard terms were expected as the bribe for hastening superabundance of riches. Martin eagerly

pressed him to explain. He did so; and although there certainly was a material difference in the bargain proposed from that entered into by old Squire Jarvis, still Martin Brophy listened in unfeigned horror.

"An' see, here it's for you," added Musha Merry, handing his begrimed card—"the auld one that stood your friend afore,—so you'll have loock vid it, *avich*." Martin took the card, and slowly and silently walked out of the little dell.

"There, now," muttered Musha Merry to himself, as he laboriously crawled up the side of the retreat, in a different direction. "An' only use id as I bid you, Martin Brophy, my boy, an' if we don't list you in the bauld Barrymount throop, *naubocklish*; (never mind;) an' in a little while afther that, plaise God, you'll be snug in the stone-jug (gaol) in their fine taun beyunt, an' in a fair way to go under the skibbeah's (Jack Ketch's) hands, in regard of being' found aut, somehow, for one o' them terrible robbers that frightens the whoie caunthry. Ay, just the way it happened to poor Mechaul, the one brother o' me, about thirty years ago, by manes of a father you had, rest his sowl, the first time our brave boys took head together, and opened the fun wid a call at Dick Brophy's house, afther sun-set; and may be it's not a nate fit for *that* to help your father's son to jest the same loock your father helped poor Mechaul to; ah, an' jest on the same ould account; ha, bud stop, isn't that Keeraun Dernphy's red head watchin' me again?"

It was Sunday morning. Half an hour after Martin Brophy left the glen, he was seen hovering about the door of the little country chapel, by the crowds who went in to early mass. They wondered that they did not see him at the entrance to the galleries, whither, consistently with his former rank, it had been his habit to repair. Indeed, they also wondered at his appearance near the house of prayer, under any circumstances, for lately he had been absent from all religious observances. But they concluded that he came to humble himself to the "call" of his priest, issued the previous Sunday. Arrived in "the body of the chapel," where the crowds knelt or stood without seats of any kind, many looked round for Martin, but none saw him.

He was in the chapel, notwithstanding. Avoiding and baffling observation, he had stolen through the throng to a spot under the rude pulpit, where inside the sweep of

its stairs, was a small space, left comparatively unthronged, and where, without his knowledge of the fact, women who proposed to communicate after the ceremony of the morning, were in the habit of kneeling, with their faces enveloped in the hoods of their dark-blue cloaks, and turned to the wall, so that they might compose themselves to approach the railings of the sanctuary. And here also, turning his face to the wall, Martin *knelt* to prepare his mind, and wait his time for his devotional act.

At a certain period of the mass, the priest elevated the consecrated bread and wine, which Roman Catholics believe to be the Real Presence; and Martin Brophy, acting upon Musha Merry's instructions, intended, when this usual ceremonial should occur, to turn his back on the altar, hold up before his eyes, in the hollow of his hand, the Ace of clubs which his tutor had given him, and bow to it thrice, and worship it thrice, "in the devil's name:" the only concession, he was assured, required by the great father of riches to give him power over mountains of gold.

In a paroxysm of desperation he had so far taken his measures. But after he had knelt down, and that mass begun, the sullen lethargy of Martin's heart became fearfully broken up. The act of apostasy he resolved to commit was, in its form, of no ordinary character; and, further, Martin Brophy believed in the Redeemer, of whose atonement for the sins of the world the sacrament was a memento; nay, still according to his creed, a perpetuation. And this Redeemer, and this sacrament, he came to forswear on his knees, for the worship of the king of hell;—the thought swelled his bosom with tremendous horror.

The pious women and girls around him murmured their aspirations of repentance for their sins, and of joy at the prospect of partaking of that very sacrament. His heart chilled and collapsed over its own hidden intent. Still he dragged the intent closer to him, and did not waver. Mass went on—every stage of its progress familiar to his ear—every response of the surpliced boys who served at the steps of the altar—he had often served there himself—and a vivid picture started before his mind, of his mother folding up his newly-washed surplice, and giving it him to button under his boyish jacket, that he might hasten off to attend his favourite priest at early prayers. The time drew near when the bread and wine

were to be consecrated. Martin shuffling on his knees, fully turned his back upon the altar, and, shaking in every limb, and teeming with cold moisture, adjusted the card in the palm of his hand. The little bell, rung by one of the boys, which gave notice of the approach of "the Elevation," tingled in his ears, and pierced into his brain. The hosannah hymn burst from the village choir, and echoed over him and around him, first loudly and shrilly, and then louder and confused, then wildly and faintly, until, as almost madness mastered him, its swell seemed to break out into scream and laughter. Again, however, he was darkly aware of the second notice of the little bell, and then with staring eyes and ghastly features, he raised the card close to his face. His arm was dragged down. He uttered a loud cry, and gazed under the head of the woman's cloak who had thus interfered between him and his terrible apostacy. The eyes of Dora Marum met his. She had learned of his dread purpose from Keraun Dornphy, who contrived to listen to Martin's conversation with Musha Merry in the glen, and who, indeed, had been long aware of the old robber's thirst for revenge against her unfortunate lover.

After his scream, Martin fell senseless, though in strong convulsions. For weeks afterwards he was a raving madman. When his senses returned to him, he found himself in the priest's house, watched by his mother and Dora Marum; they were softly whispering over his bed. Martin Brophy did not leave that house till, in an humbled, contrite, and chastened spirit, he had worthily propitiated Heaven's forgiveness, through the medium of the sacrament he had so recently proposed, along with that Heaven, to forswear. Restored to health in mind, in heart, and in body, he seriously set himself to follow the advice given to him by Dora in the Glen of Coile; and from very small beginnings, with perhaps some compassionate allowances for his griefs and sufferings, became, in a few years, "a match," in old Dan Marum's eye, for his only daughter, just about the time that Musha Merry left this world to seek his unavenged brother in a better or a worse, and by the same mode of exit vouchsafed to that worthy brother.

THE END.







